

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



101 378

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY









•

**PROCLAIM LIBERTY!**

•

ALSO by GILBERT SELDES

On Related Subjects

Your Money and Your Life  
Mainland

The Years of the Locust  
Against Revolution

The Stammering Century

The Seven Living Arts

The United States and the War  
(London, 1917)

This is America  
(Moving Picture)

AND

The Movies Come From America

The Movies and the Talkies

The Future of Drinking

The Wings of the Eagle

Lysistrata (A Modern Version)

*Proclaim*  
**LIBERTY!**

*By*  
GILBERT SELDES

Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the  
inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto them. . .  
Leviticus xxv, 10.



THE GREYSTONE PRESS  
NEW YORK

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY THE WILLIAM BYRD PRESS, INC.  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

•

TO THE CHILDREN  
who will have  
to live in the world  
we are making

•



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are given to the Macmillan Company for their permission to quote several paragraphs from Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* in my first chapter. *The Grand Strategy* by H. A. Sargeaunt and Geoffrey West, referred to in chapter two, is published by Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

G. S.





## Contents

	PAGE
CHAPTER I TOTAL VICTORY	13
CHAPTER II STRATEGY FOR THE CITIZEN	29
CHAPTER III UNITED....?	44
CHAPTER IV "THE STRATEGY OF TRUTH"	61
CHAPTER V THE FORGOTTEN DOCUMENT	77
CHAPTER VI "THE POPULATION OF THESE STATES"	92
CHAPTER VII ADDRESS TO EUROPE	111
CHAPTER VIII THE SCIENCE OF SHORT WAVE	119
CHAPTER IX DEFINITION OF AMERICA	129
CHAPTER X POPULARITY AND POLITICS	156
CHAPTER XI THE TOOLS OF DEMOCRACY	163
CHAPTER XII DEMOCRATIC CONTROL	170
CHAPTER XIII THE LIBERTY BELL	199



**PROCLAIM LIBERTY!**



## CHAPTER I

# Total Victory

THE PERIL WE ARE IN TODAY IS THIS:

For the first time since we became a nation, a power exists strong enough to destroy us.

This book is about the strength we have to destroy our enemies—where it lies, what hinders it, how we can use it. It is not about munitions, but about men and women; it deals with the unity we have to create, the victory we have to win; it deals with the character of America, what it has been and is and will be. And since character is destiny, this book is about the destiny of America.

The next few pages are in the nature of counter-propaganda. With the best of motives, and the worst results, Americans for months after December 7, 1941, said that Pearl Harbor was a costly blessing because it united all Americans and made us understand why the war was inevitable. A fifty-mile bus trip outside of New York—perhaps even a subway ride within its borders—would have proved both of these statements blandly and dangerously false. American unity could not be made in Japan; like most other imports from that country, it was a cheap imitation, lasting a short time, and costly in the long run; and recognition of the nature of the war can never come as the result of anything but a realistic analysis of our own purposes as well as those of our enemies.

What follows is, obviously, the work of a citizen, not a specialist. For some twenty years I have observed the sources of American unity and dispersion; during the past fifteen years my stake in the future of American liberty has been the most important thing in my life, as it is the most important thing in the life of anyone whose children will live in the world we are now creating. I am therefore not writing

frivolously, or merely to testify to my devotion; I am writing to persuade—to uncover sources of strength which others may have overlooked, to create new weapons, to stir new thoughts. If I thought the war for freedom could be won by writing lies, I would write lies. I am afraid the war will be lost if we do not face the truth, so I write what I believe to be true about America—about its past and present and future, meaning its history and character and destiny—but mostly about the present, with only a glance at our forgotten past, and a declaration of faith in the future which is, I hope, the inevitable result of our victory.

We know the name and character of our enemy—the Axis; but after months of war we are not entirely convinced that it intends to destroy us because we do not see why it has to destroy us. Destroy; not defeat. The desperate war we are fighting is still taken as a gigantic manœuvre; obviously the Axis wants to “win” battles and dictate “peace terms”. We still use these phrases of 1918, unaware that the purpose of Axis war is not defeat of an enemy, but destruction of his national life. We have seen it happen in France and Poland and Norway and Holland; but we cannot imagine that the Nazis intend actually to appoint a German Governor General over the Mississippi Valley, a Gauleiter in the New England provinces, and forbid us to read newspapers, go to the movies or drink coffee; we cannot believe that the Axis intends to destroy the character of America, annihilating the liberties our ancestors fought for, and the level of comfort which we cherished so scrupulously in later generations. In moments of pure speculation, when we wonder what would happen “at worst”, we think of a humiliating defeat on land and sea, bombardment of our cities, surrender—and a peace conference at which we and Britain agree to pay indemnities; perhaps, until we pay off, German and Japanese soldiers would be quartered in our houses, police our streets; but we assume that after the “shooting war” was over, they would not ravish our women.

*Victory (Axis Model)*

All this is the war of 1918. In 1942 the purpose of Axis victory is the destruction of the American system, the annihilation of the financial and industrial power of the United States, the reduction of this country to an inferior position in the world and the enslavement of the American people by depriving them of their liberty and of their wealth. The actual physical slavery of the American people and the deliberate taking over of our factories and farms and houses and motor cars and radios are both implied in an Axis victory; the enslavement is automatic, the robbery of our wealth will depend on Axis economic strategy: if we can produce more *for them* by remaining in technical possession of our factories, they will let us keep them.

We cannot believe this is so because we see no reason for it. Our intentions toward the German and Italian people are not to enslave and impoverish; on the contrary, we think of the defeat of their leaders as the beginning of liberty. We do not intend to make Venice a tributary city, nor Essen a factory town run by American government officials. We may police the streets of Berlin until a democratic government proves its strength by punishing the SS and the Gestapo, until the broken prisoners of Dachau return in whatever triumph they can still enjoy. But our basic purpose is still to defeat the armed forces of the Axis and to insure ourselves against another war by the creation of free governments everywhere.

(Neither the American people nor their leaders have believed that a responsible peaceable government can be erected *now* in Japan. Toward the Japanese our unclarified intentions are simple: annihilation of the power, to such an extent that it cannot rise again—as a military or a commercial rival. The average citizen would probably be glad to hand over to the Chinese the job of governing Japan.)

Fortunately, the purposes of any war alter as the war goes

on; as we fight we discover the reasons for fighting and the intensity of our effort, the cost of victory, the danger of defeat, all compel us to think desperately about the kind of peace for which we are fighting. The vengeful articles of the treaty of Versailles were written after the Armistice by politicians; the constructive ones were created during the war, and it is quite possible that they would have been accepted by Americans if the United States had fought longer and therefore thought longer about them.

We shall probably have time to think out a good peace in this war. But we will not create peace of any kind unless we know why an Axis peace means annihilation for us; and why, at the risk of defeat in the field and revolution at home, the Axis powers had to go to war on the United States.

If we impose our moral ideas upon the future, the attack on Pearl Harbor will stand as the infamous immediate cause of the war; by Axis standards, Pearl Harbor was the final incident of one series of events, the first incident of another, all having the same purpose, the destruction of American democracy—which, so long as it endured, undermined the strength of the totalitarian powers.

Why? Why are Hitler and Mussolini and Tojo insecure if we survive? Why were we in danger so long as they were victorious? The answer lies in the character of the two groups of nations; in all great tragedy, the *reason* has to be found in the character of those involved; the war is tragic, in noble proportions, and we have to know the character of our enemy, the character of our own people, too, to understand why it was inevitable—and how we will win.

Our character, molded by our past, upholds or betrays us in our present crisis, and so creates our future. That is the sense in which character is Destiny.

We know everything hateful about our enemies; long before the war began we knew the treachery of the Japanese military caste, the jackal aggression of Mussolini, the brutal-



ity and falseness of Hitler; and the enthusiastic subservience of millions of people to each of these leaders.

But these things do not explain why we are a danger to the Axis, and the Axis to us.

*"Historic Necessity"*

The profound necessity underlying this war rises from the nature of fascism: it is a combination of forces and ideas; the forces are new, but the basic ideas have occurred at least once before in history, as the Feudal Order. Democracy destroyed Feudalism; and Feudalism, returning in a new form as Fascism, must destroy democracy or go down in the attempt; the New Order and the New World cannot exist side by side, because they are both expanding forces; they have touched one another and only one will survive. We might blindly let the new despotism live although it is the most expansive and dynamic force since 1776; but it cannot let us live. We could co-exist with Czarism because it was a shrinking force; or with British Imperialism because its peak of expansion was actually reached before ours began. We could not have lived side by side with Trotskyite Communism because it was as aggressive as the exploding racialism of the German Nazis.

As it happened, Stalin, not Trotsky, took over from Lenin; Socialism in one country supplanted "the permanent revolution". Stalin made a sort of peace with all the world; he called off his dogs of propaganda; he allowed German Communism to be beaten to death in concentration camps; and, as Trotsky might have said, the "historical obligation" to destroy capitalist-democracy was undertaken not by the bearded old Marxian enemies of Capital, but by Capital's own young sadists, the Storm Troopers, called in by the frightened bankers and manufacturers of Italy and Germany. That is why, since 1932, realist democrats have known that the enemy had to be Hitler, not Stalin. It was not a choice

between ideologies ; it was a choice between degrees of expansion. Moreover, Stalin himself recognized the explosive force of fascism in Germany and shrank within his own borders ; he withdrew factories to the Urals, he dispersed his units of force as far from the German border as he could. By doing so, he became the ideal ally of all those powers whom Hitler's expanding pressure was discommoding. The relatively static democratic nations of Europe, the shrinking semi-socialist states like France and Austria, were bruised by contact with Hitler ; presently they were absorbed because the Nazi geography demanded a continent for a military base.

The destruction of America was a geographical necessity, for Hitler ; and something more. Geographically, the United States lies between Hitler's enemies, England and Russia ; we are not accustomed to the thought, but the fact is that we are a transatlantic base for England's fleet ; so long as we are undefeated, the fleet remains a threat to Germany. Look at the other side : we are a potential transpacific base for Russia ; our fleet can supply the Soviets and China ; Russia can retreat toward Siberian ports and join us. So we dominate the two northern oceans, and with Russia, the Arctic as well. That is the geographic reason for Hitler's attack on us.

The moral reason is greater than the strategic reason : the history of the United States must be destroyed, its future must turn black and bitter ; because fasci-feudalism, the new order, cannot rest firmly on its foundations until Democracy perishes from the earth.

So long as a Democracy (with a comparatively high standard of living) survives, the propaganda of fascism must fail ; the essence of that propaganda is that democratic nations cannot combine liberty and security. In order to have security, says Hitler, you must give up will and want, freedom of action and utterance ; you must be disciplined and ordered—because the modern world is too complex to allow for the will of the individual. The democracies insist that the rich complexity of the world was created by democratic freedom

and that production, distribution, security and progress have not yet outstripped the capacity of man, so that there is room for the private life, the undisciplined, even the un-social. The essential democratic belief in "progress" is not a foolish optimism, it is basic belief in the desirability of *change*; and we, democratic people, believe that the critical unregimented individual must have some leeway so that progress will be made. The terror of change in which dictators live is shown in their constant appeal to permanence; we know that the only thing permanent in life is change; when change ceases, life ceases. It does not surprise us that the logic of fascism ends in death.

So long as the democratic nations achieve change without revolution, and prosperity without regimentation, the Nazi states are in danger. In a few generations they may indoctrinate their people to love poverty and ignorance, to fear independence; for fascism, the next twenty years are critical. Unless we, the democratic people, are destroyed now, the fascist adults of 1940 to 1960 will still know that freedom and wealth co-exist in this world and are better than slavery.

So much—which is enough—was true even before the declaration of war; since then the nazi-fascists must prove that democracies cannot defend themselves, cannot sacrifice comfort, cannot invent and produce engines of war, cannot win victories. And we are equally compelled, for our own safety, to destroy the *principle* which tries to destroy us. The alternative to victory over America is therefore not defeat—or an inconclusive truce. The alternative is annihilation for the fascist regime and death for hundreds of thousands of nazi party men. They will be liquidated because when they are defeated they will no longer have a function to perform; their only function is the organization of victory.

The fascist powers are expanding and are situated so that with their subordinates, they can control the world. And the purpose of their military expansion is to exclude certain nations from the markets of the world. Even for the "self

sufficient" United States, this means that the standard of living must go down—drastically and for ever.

The policy is not entirely new. It develops from tariff barriers and subsidies; we have suffered from it at the hands of our best friends—under the Stevenson Act regulating rubber prices, for instance; we have profited by it, as when we refused to sell helium to Germany or when our tariff laws kept Britain and France out of our markets, so that they never were able to pay their war debts. This means only that we have been living in a capitalist world and have defended ourselves against other capitalists, as well as we could.

### *Revolution in Reverse*

The new thing under nazi-fascism is the destruction of private business, buying and selling. As trade is the basic activity of our time, nazi-fascism is revolutionary; it is also reactionary; and there is nothing in the world more dangerous than a reactionary revolution. The Communist revolution was radical and whoever had any stake in the world—a house, a car, a job—shied away from the uncertainty of the future. But the reactionary revolution of Mussolini and Hitler instantly captivated the rich and well-born; to them, fascism was not a mere protection against the Reds, it was a positive return to the days of absolute authority; it was the annihilation of a hundred and fifty years of Democracy, it blotted out the French and American Revolutions, it erased the names of Napoleon and Garibaldi from Continental European history, leaving the name of Metternich all the more splendid in its isolation. The manufacturers of motor cars and munitions were terrified of Reds in the factories; the great bankers and landowners looked beyond the momentary danger, and they embraced fascism because they hoped it would destroy the power let loose by the World War—which was first political and then economic democracy.

This was, in theory, correct; fascism meant to destroy democracy, but it had to destroy capitalism with it. The idiots

who ran the financial and industrial world in the 1920's proved their incompetence by the end of 1929; but their frivolous and irresponsible minds were exposed years earlier when they began to support the power which by its own confessed character had to destroy them. It is a pleasant irony that ten minutes with Karl Marx or Lenin or with a parlor pink could have shown the great tycoons that they were committing suicide.

Only an enemy can really appreciate Karl Marx. The faithful have to concentrate on the future coming of the Communists' Millenium; but the sceptic can admire the cool analysis of the past by which Marx arrived at his criticism of the Capitalist System. In that analysis Marx simplifies history so:

No economic system lives for ever.

Each system has in it the germ of its own successor.

The feudal system came to its end when Columbus broke through its geographical walls. (Gutenberg and Leonardo and a thousand others broke through its intellectual walls at about the same time, and Luther through the social and religious barriers.)

With these clues we can see that Democratic Capitalism is the successor to Feudalism.

From this point Marx had to go into prophecy and according to his followers he did rather well in predicting the next stages: he saw, in the 1860's, the kind of capitalism we enjoyed in 1914. He did not see all its results—the enormous increase in the number of prosperous families was not in his calculations and he might have been surprised to see the least, not the most, industrialized country fall first into Communism. But to the sceptic only one thing in the Marxian prophecy is important. He says that in the later stages of Capitalism, it will become incompetent; it will not be able to handle the tools of production and distribution; and suddenly or gradually, it will change into a *new* system. (According to Marx, this new system will be Communism.)

There were moments under the grim eyes of Mr. Hoover when all the parts of this prophecy seemed to have been fulfilled. There are apparently some Americans who wish that the New Deal had not interposed itself between the Gold Standard and the Red Flag.

These are the great leaders (silenced now by war) who might have studied Marx before flirting with the fascists. For even the rudimentary analysis above shows that Capitalism cannot *grow into* fascism; fascism moves *backward* from democratic capitalism, it moves into the system which democracy destroyed—the feudal system. The capitalist system may be headed for slow or sudden death if it goes on as it is; it may have a long life if it can adapt itself to the world it has itself created; but in every sense of the words, capitalism has no future if it goes back to the past. And fascism is the discarded past of capitalism.

We think we know this now because the fasci-feudal states have declared war on us. Now we see how natural is the alliance between the European states who wish to restore feudalism and the Asiatic state which never abandoned it. Now we recognize the Nazi or Fascist party as the equivalent of feudal nobles and in "labor battalions" we see the outlines of serfs cringing from their masters. But we do not yet see that a feudal state cannot live in the same world as a free state—and that we are as committed to destroy fascism as Hitler is to destroy democracy.

We strike back at Japan because Japan attacked us, and fight Germany and Italy because they declared war on us; but we will not win the war until we understand that the Axis had to attack us and that we must destroy the system which made the attack inevitable.

### *Walled Town and Open Door*

At first glance, the feudal nature of fascism seems unimportant. In pure logic, maybe, feudal and democratic systems cannot co-exist, but in fact, feudal Japan did exist in 1830

and the United States was enjoying Jacksonian democracy. There must be something more than abstract hostility between the two systems.

There is. Feudalism is a walled town; democracy is a ship at sea and a covered wagon. The capitalist pioneer gaps every wall in his path and his path is everywhere. The defender of the wall must destroy the invader before he comes near. In commercial terms, the fascists must conquer us in order to eliminate us as competitors for world trade. We can understand the method if we compare fascism at peace with democracy at war.

In the first days of the war we abandoned several essential freedoms: speech and press and radio and assembly as far as they might affect the conduct of the war; and then, with more of a struggle, we gave up the right to manufacture motor cars, the right to buy or sell tires; we accepted an allotment of sugar; we abandoned the right to go into the business of manufacturing radio sets; we allowed the government to limit our installment buying; we neither got nor gave credit as freely as before; we gave up, in short, the system of civil liberty and free business enterprise—in order to win the war.

Six hundred years ago, all over Europe the economy of peace was exactly our economy of war. In the Middle Ages, the *right* to become a watchmaker did not exist; the guild of watchmakers accepted or rejected an applicant. By this limitation, the total number of watches produced was roughly governed; the price was also established (and overcharging was a grave offense in the Middle Ages). Foreign competition was excluded; credit was for financiers, and the installment system had not been invented.

The feudalism of six hundred years ago is the peace-time fascism of six years ago. The fascist version of feudalism is State control of production. In Nazi Germany the liberty to work at a trade, to manufacture a given article, to stop working, to change professions, were all seriously limited. The supply of materials was regulated by the State, the number

of radios to be exported was set by the State in connection with the purchase of strategic imports; the State could encourage or prevent the importation of coffee or helium or silk stockings; it could and did force men and women to raise crops, to make fuses, to learn flying, to stop reading. It created a feudal state far more benighted than any in the actual Middle Ages; it was in peace *totally* coordinated for production—far more so than we are now, at war.

The purpose of our sacrifice of liberty is to make things a thousand times faster than before; to save raw materials we abolish the cuff on our trousers and we use agate pots instead of aluminum; we work longer hours and work harder; we keep machines going twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week—all for the single purpose of maximum output.

For the same purpose, the fascist state is organized *at peace*—to out-produce and *under-sell* its competitors.

The harried German people gave up their freedom in order to recover prosperity. They became a nation of war-workers in an economic war. A vast amount of their production went into tanks and Stukas; another segment went into export goods to be traded for strategic materials; and only a small amount went for food and the comforts of life. Almost nothing went into luxuries.

### *Burning Books—and Underselling*

That is why the *internal* affairs of Germany became of surpassing importance to us. Whether we knew it or not, we were in competition with the labor battalions. When we denounced the Nazi suppression of free speech, the jailing of religious leaders, the silencing of Catholics, the persecution of Jews, we were as correct economically as we were ethically; the destruction of liberty had to be accomplished in Germany as the comfort level fell, to prevent criticism and conflict. Because liberals were tortured and books burned and Jews and Catholics given over to satisfy a frightful appetite for hatred, the people of Germany were kept longer at their work,



and got less and less butter, and made more and more steel to undersell us in Soviet Russia or the Argentine; they made also more and more submarines to sink our ships if we ever came to war. Every liberty erased by Hitler was an economic attack on us, it made slave labor a more effective competitor to our free labor. The concentration camp and the blackguards on the streets were all part of an *economic* policy, to create a feudal serfdom in the place of free labor. If the policy succeeds, we will have to break down our standard of living and give up entirely our habits of freedom, in order to meet the competition of slave labor.

It means today that we will not have cheap motor cars and presently it may mean that we will not have high test steel or meat every day. Victory for the Axis system means that we work for the Germans and the Japanese, literally, actually, on their terms, in factories bossed by their local representatives; and anything less than complete victory for us means that we work harder and longer for less and less, paying for defeat by accepting a mean standard of living, not daring to fight our way into the markets of the world which fascism has closed to us.

Readers of *You Can't Do Business With Hitler* will not need to be convinced again that the two systems—his and ours—are mutually incompatible. Fortunately for us, they are also mutually destructive. The basis of fascism is, as I have noted, the feudal hope of a fixed unchangeable form of society which will last forever; the basis of democracy is change (which we call progress). Hitler announces that nazism will last a thousand years; the Japanese assert that their society has lasted longer; and the voice of Mussolini, when it used to be heard, spoke of Ancient Rome. We who are too impatient of the past, and need to understand our tradition, are at any rate aware of one thing—it is a tradition of change. (Jefferson to Lincoln to Theodore Roosevelt—the acceptance of change, even of radical change, is basic in American history.)

We might tolerate the tactics of fascism; the racial hatred, the false system of education, the attack on religion, all might pass if they weren't part of the great strategic process of the fascists, which is our mortal enemy, as our process is theirs. They exclude and we penetrate; they have to *destroy* liberty in order to control making and buying and selling and using steel and bread and radios, and we have to *create* liberty in order to create more customers for more things. They have to suppress dissent because dissent means difference which no feudal system can afford; we have to encourage criticism because only free inquiry destroys error and discovers new and useful truths.

These hostile actions make us enemies because our penetration will not accept the Axis wall thrown up around nations normally free and friendly to us; and the Axis must make us into fascists because there can be no exceptions in a system dedicated to conformity. The whole world must accept a world-system.

In particular, we must be eliminated because we do expose the fraud of fascism—which is that liberty must be sacrificed to attain power. This is an open principle of fascism, as it is of all dictatorships and “total” states. It is very appealing to tyrants and to weaklings, and the ruthlessness of the attack on liberty seems “realistic” even to believers in democracy—especially during the critical moments when action is needed and democracies seem to do nothing but talk. The truth is that our Executive is tremendously prompt and unhampered in war time; the appeaser of fascism does not tell the truth; he wants an end to talk, which is dangerous, because he is always at war and the secret fascist would have to admit that his perpetual war is against the people of the United States. So he says only that in modern times, liberty is too great a luxury, too easily abused; he says that a great State is too delicately balanced to tolerate the whims and idiosyncrasies of individuals; if the State has discovered the best diet for all the citizens, then no citizen can “prefer” another diet,

and no expert may cast doubt on the official rations. To cause uncertainty is to diminish efficiency; to back "wrong" ideas is treason.

One of the best descriptions of this state of mind occurs in a page of Arthur Koester's *Darkness at Noon*. It is fiction, but not untrue:

"A short time ago, our leading agriculturist, B., was shot with thirty of his collaborators because he maintained the opinion that nitrate artificial manure was superior to potash. No. 1 is all for potash; therefore B. and the thirty had to be liquidated as *saboteurs*. In a nationally centralized agriculture, the alternative of nitrate or potash is of enormous importance: it can decide the issue of the next war. If No. 1 was in the right, history will absolve him, and the execution of the thirty-one men will be a mere bagatelle. If he was wrong . . .

"It is that alone that matters: who is objectively in the right. The cricket-moralists are agitated by quite another problem: whether B. was subjectively in good faith when he recommended nitrogen. If he was not, according to their ethics he should be shot, even if it should subsequently be shown that nitrogen would have been better after all. If he was in good faith, then he should be acquitted and allowed to continue making propaganda for nitrate, even if the country should be ruined by it. . . .

"That is, of course, complete nonsense. For us the question of subjective good faith is of no interest. He who is in the wrong must pay; he who is in the right will be absolved. That is the law of historical credit; it was our law."

Intellectual fascists are particularly liable to the error of thinking that this sort of thing is above morality, beyond good and evil. The "cricket-moralists" are people like ourselves and the English, who are agitated because "innocent" men are put to death; the hard-headed ones answer that innocence isn't important; effectiveness is what counts. Yet the

democratic-cricket-morality is in the long run more realistic than the tough school which kills its enemies first and then finds out if they were guilty. The reason we allow a scientist to cry for nitrates after we have decided on potash is that we have to keep scientific investigation alive; we cannot trust ourselves for too long to the potash group. In five years, both nitrate and potash may be discarded because we have found something better. And no scientist will for long retain his critical pioneering spirit if an official superior can reject his research. (An Army board rejected the research of General William Mitchell and it took a generation for Army men to recover initiative; and this was in an organization accustomed to respect rank and tradition. In science, which is more sensitive, the only practical thing is to reward the heretic and the explorer even while one adopts the idea of the orthodox.)

This question of heresy, apparently so trifling, is critical for us because it is a clue to the weakness of Hitlerism and it provides us with the only strategy by which Hitlerism can be destroyed.

## CHAPTER II

### Strategy for the Citizen

THERE IS A TENDENCY at this moment to consider Hitler a master strategist, master psychologist, master statesman. His analysis of democracy, however, leaves something unsaid, and the nervous strong men who admire Hitler, as well as the weaklings who need "leadership", are doing their best to fill in the gaps. The Hitlerian concept of totality allows no room for difference; an official bread ration and an official biochemistry are equally to be accepted by everyone; in democracy Hitler finds a deplorable tendency to shrink from rationing and to encourage deviations from the established principles of biochemistry. This, he says, weakens the State; for one thing it leads to endless discussion. (Hitler is an orator, not a debater; dislike of letting other people talk is natural; his passion for action on a world-scale, immense in space, enduring for all time, has the same terrific concentration on himself.) Hitler's admirers in a democracy take this up with considerable pleasure; in each of his victories they see an argument against the Bill of Rights. Then war comes; sugar is wanting and we accept a ration card; supreme commands are established in various fields; and the sentiment spreads that "we can only beat Hitler by becoming a 'total' State". (No one dares say "Nazi".)

Hitler, discerning in us a toleration of dissent, has driven hard into every crevice, trying to split us apart, like cannel coal. He has tried to turn dissent into disunion—and he has been helped by some of the most loyal and patriotic Americans almost as much as he has been helped by bundists.

We have not known how to deal with dissent; we stopped looking for the causes of disagreement; even when war came, we confused the areas of human action in which difference is

vital with the areas in which difference is a mortal danger.

The moment we saw the direction of Hitler's drive, which was to magnify our differences, we began to encourage him by actively intensifying all our disagreements; the greater our danger, the more we were at odds. The results were serious enough.

No policy governing production had been accepted by industry;

No policy governing labor relations had been put into practise so that it was operating smoothly;

No great stock of vital raw materials was laid up;

No great stock of vital war machinery had been created;

No keen awareness of the significance of the war had become an integrated part of American thought;

No awareness of all the possibilities of attack had become an integrated part of military and naval thought.

To this pitch of unreadiness the technique of "divide and disturb" had brought us—but it had, none the less, failed. For the purpose of disruption in America was to paralyze our will, to prevent us from entering the war, to create a dangerous internal front if we did enter the war.

What we proved was this: dissent is not a symptom of weakness, it is a source of strength. It is the counterpart of the great scientific methods of exploration, comparison, proof. Our dissents mean that we continue to search; they mean that we do not rule out improvement after we have accepted a machine or a method. (We carried this "dissent" to an extreme in "yearly models" of motor cars and almost daily models of lipstick; but we did manufacture in quantity, and the error of *change before production* which stalled our aircraft program of 1917 was not repeated.)

### *Why We Can't Use Hitler*

If we "need a Hitler" to defeat Hitler, we are lost, at this moment, irretrievably, because the *final* triumph of Hitlerism is to make us need Hitler. The truth is we cannot use a

Hitler, we cannot use fascism, we cannot use any form of "total" organization except in the one field where totality has always existed, which is war. So far as war touches the composition of women's stockings or children's ice-cream sodas, we need unified organization in the domestic field; but not "total government". We have to be told (since it is not a matter of individual taste) how many flavors of ice-cream may be manufactured; but the regimentation of people is not required. (The United States Army has officially declared against complete regimentation in one of its own fields; every soldier studies the history of this war and is encouraged to ask questions about it, because "the War Department considers that every American soldier should know clearly why and for what we are fighting.")

We cannot use a Hitler because we lack the time. We cannot catch up with Hitler on Hitlerism. We cannot wait ten years to re-condition the people of America, the ten vital years which Hitler spent enslaving the German mind were spent by us in digging the American people out from the ruined economic system which collapsed on them in 1929. We are conditioned by the angry and excited controversy over the New Deal; we are opinionated, variant, prejudiced, individual, argumentative. We cannot be changed over to the German model. Perhaps in a quieter moment we could be captivated (if not captured) by an American-type dictator, a Huey Long; in wartime, when people undergo incalculable changes of habit without a murmur, the old framework and the established forms of life must be scrupulously revered. Otherwise people will be scared; they will not respond to encouragement. That is why we cannot take time to learn how to love a dictator.

The alternative is obvious: to re-discover the virtue which Hitler calls a vice, to defeat totality by variety (which is the essential substance of unity). I do not mean five admirals disputing command of one fleet or one assembly line ordered to make three wholly different aeroplane engines. I mean the

combination of elements, as they are combined in the food we eat and the water we drink; and as they are combined in the people we are.

We have lived by combining a variety of elements; we have always allowed as much freedom to variety as we could, believing that out of this freedom would come a steady progress, a definite betterment of our State; so, we have been taught, the human race has progressed, not by utter uniformity, and not by anarchy, but by an alternation of two things—the standard and the variant.

Now we face death—called totality. For us it is death; and we can not avoid it by taking it in homeopathic doses, we can only live by destroying whatever is deadly to us.

It is hard for a layman to translate the “strategy of variety” into terms of production or naval movement. The translation is being made every day by men in the factories and in the field; instinctively they follow the technique of variety because it is natural to them. All the layman can do is to watch and make sure that out of panic we do not betray ourselves to the enemy.

It is not a matter of military technique, but of common sense that we can only destroy our enemy out of our strength, striking at his weakness; we can never defeat him by striking with our weakest arm against his strongest. And our strong point is the variety, the freedom, the independence of our thought and action. Hitler calls all this a weakness, because he has destroyed it in his own country; and so gives us the clue to his own weak spot.

### *Has Hitler a Weakness?*

In the face of the stupendous victories of Germany, it is hard to say that Hitler’s army has a weak spot; but it did not take London or Moscow in its first attempts, nor Suez. Somewhere in this formidable strength a weakness is to be discovered; it will not be discovered by us if we are intimidated



into imitation. We have to be flexible, feeling out our adversary, falling back when we have to, lunging forward in another place or on another level; for this war is being fought on several planes at once, and if we are not strong enough today on one, we can fight on another; we are, in fact, fighting steadily on the production front, intermittently on the V (or foreign-propaganda) front, on the front of domestic stability, on the financial front (in connection with the United Nations); and the war front itself is divided into military and naval (with air in each) and transport; our opportunity is to win by creating our own most effective front, and keep hammering on it while we get ready to fight on the ones our enemies have chosen.

Every soldier feels the difference between his own army and any other; every general or statesman knows that the kind of war a nation fights rises out of the kind of nation it is. This is the form of strategy which the layman has to understand—in self-defense against the petrified mind which either will not change the methods of the last war, or will scrap everything in order to imitate the enemy. The layman knows something of warfare now, because the layman is in it. He knows that the tank and the Stuka and the parachute troop were separate alien inventions combined by the German High Command; but combinations of various arms is not an exclusively German conception. The new concept in this war is ten years old, it is the sacrifice of a nation to its army, the creation of mass-munitions, the concentration on offensive striking power. All of these are successful against broken and betrayed armies in France, against small armies unsupported by tanks and planes; they are not entirely successful against huge armies, fighting under trusted leaders, for a civilization they love, an army of individual heroes, supported by guerillas on one side, and an incalculable production power on the other. Possibly the Soviet Union has discovered one weakness in the German war-strategy; it may not be the weakness

through which we can strike; we may have to find another. We have to find the weakness of Japan, too—and we are not so inclined to imitate them.

There is a famous picture of Winston Churchill, hatless in the street, with a napkin in his hand, looking up at the sky; it was in Antwerp in 1914 and Churchill had left his dinner to see enemy aircraft in the sky—an omen of things to come. At Antwerp Churchill had tried to head off the German swing to the sea, but Antwerp was a defeat and Churchill returned to London, still looking for some way to refuse the German system of the trench, the bombardment, and the breakthrough. He tried it with the tank; he tried it at Gallipoli; finally the Allies tried it, half-heartedly, at Salonika. The war, on Germany's terms, was a stalemate and Germany might have broken through; the war ended because the balance was dislocated when America came in and, simultaneously, both England and America began to fight the war also on the propaganda level. By that time Churchill was "discredited"; he had tried to shorten the war by two years and the British forces, with success in their hands, had failed to strike home, failed to send the one more battleship, the one more division which would have insured victory—because Kitchener and the War Office and the French High Command wanted to keep on fighting the war in the German way.

### *Escape from Despair*

The desperation which overcomes the inexpert civilian at the thought of fighting the military machines of Germany and Japan is justified *only* if we propose to fight them on their terms, in the way they propose to us. Analogies are dangerous, but there is a sense in which war is a chess game (as chess is a war game). White opens with Queen's pawn to Qu 3, and Black recognizes the gambit. He can accept or decline. If he accepts, it is because he thinks he can fight well on that basis, but Black can also reject White's plan of cam-

paign. The good player is one who can break out of the strategy which the other tries to impose.

We have felt ourselves incapable of fighting Hitler because we hate Hitlerism and we do not want to think as he does, feel as he does, act as he does—with more horror, more cruelty, more debasement of humanity, in order to defeat him. And the public statements of our leaders have necessarily concealed any new plan of attack; in fact we have heard chiefly of super-fascist production, implying our acceptance of the fascist tactics in the field; the best we can expect is that soon we, not they, will take the offensive. If this were all, it would still leave us fighting the fascist war.

The civilian's totally untrained dislike of this prospect is of considerable importance because it is a parallel to the citizen's authoritative and decisive objection to the Hitlerian strategy of propaganda; and if the civilian holds out, if he discovers our native natural strategy of civil action in the war, the army will be constantly recruiting anti-fascists, will live in an atmosphere of inventive anti-fascism, and therefore will never completely fall under the spell of the enemy's tactics. That is why it is important for the citizen to know that he is right. *We do not have to fight Hitler in his way*; that is what Hitler wants us to do, because *if we do we can not win*. There is another way—although we may not have found it yet.

In its celebrated "orientation course" the United States army explains the strategy of the war to every one of its soldiers, not to make them strategists, but to make them better soldiers. The civilian needs at least as much knowledge so that he is not over-elated by a stroke of luck or too cast down by disaster. The jokes about amateur strategists and the High Command's justifiable resentment of ignorant criticism are both beside the point; civilians do not need text books on tactics; they need to know the nature of warfare. They needed desperately to know in February, 1942, why General

MacArthur was performing a useful function in Bataan and why bombers were not sent to his aid; and this information came to them from the President. But the President is not the only one who can tell civilians how long it takes to transport a division and put it into action; how air and sea power interact; what a beach action involves; and a few other facts which would allay impatience and give the worker in the factory some sense of the importance of his work. The civilian in war work or out of it should know something about war, and in particular he should know that there are several kinds of war, one of which is correct and appropriate and effective for us.

### *Military Mummery*

It might be a good thing if some of the mumbo-jumbo about military strategy were reduced to simple terms, so that the civilians, whose lives and fortunes and sacred honor are involved, would know what is happening to them. The military mind, aided by the military expert, loves to use special terms; until recently the commentator on strategy was as obscure and difficult as a music critic, and despatches from the field as obscure as prescriptions in Latin. It is supposed that doctors wrote in Latin not only because it was an exact and universal language, but because it was not understood by laymen, so it gave mystery and authority to their prescriptions. Latin is still not understood, but the simple art of advertising has destroyed a vast amount of business for the doctors because ads in English persuaded the ignorant to use quack remedies and patent and proprietary medicines, without consulting the doctor.

A rebellion like this against the military mind may occur; experts are now writing for the popular press, and talking in elementary terms to millions by radio. They cannot teach the techniques of correlated tank and air attack any more than music critics can teach the creation of head tones. But they can expound the fundamentals—and so expose the military

leadership to the *criticism it desperately needs* if it is to function properly. The essentials of warfare are dreadfully simple—the production manager of any great industrial concern deals with most of them every day. You have to get materials and equipment; train men to use certain tools and instruments; bring power to bear at chosen points, in sufficient quantity, at the right time, for the right length of time; you have to combine the various kinds of force at your disposal, and arrange a schedule, as there is a schedule for chassis and body work in a motor car factory, so that the right chassis is in the right place as its body is lowered upon it; you have to stop or go on, according to judgments based on information. The terrifying decisions, the choice of place and time, the selection of instruments, the allocation of power to several points, are made by the high command on the grand scale or by a sergeant if his officer is shot down; and the right judgments distinguish the great commander or the good platoon leader from the second rate. The civilian, without information, cannot decide what to do; but, as Britain's *civilian* courts of inquiry have shown, he can tell whether the right decisions have been made. He can tell as well as the greatest commander, that indecision and dispersion of forces made success at the Dardanelles impossible in 1916; or that lack of a unified plan of tank attack made the wreck of France certain in 1940. The civilian American who has taken a hundred detours on motor roads can understand even the purely military elements of a flanking movement; the industrial American need not be baffled by the problems of fire-power, coordination, or supply. We can understand the war if the mystery is stripped away, and if we are allowed to understand that the wrong strategy is as fatal to us as the wrong prescription.

I believe that we will have to strip the false front from international diplomacy, from warfare, from all the inherited "mysteries" which are still pre-Revolutionary in essence. We will have to bring these things up to date because our lives

depend on them, we can no longer depend on the strategy of Gustavus Adolphus or the diplomacy of Metternich. Five million soldiers in khaki, with a nation's life disrupted for their support, require a different strategy from that of Burgoyne's hired Hessians; and a hundred and thirty million individuals simply do not want the intrigue and Congress-dances diplomacy which traded territory, set up kings, and found pretexts for good wars.

We have destroyed a good deal of the mummery of economics—not without help; politics has become more familiar to us, we now know that a thief in office is a thief, that tariffs are not made by abstract thinkers, but by manufacturers and farmers and factory workers; we know, with some poignancy, that taxes are paid by people like ourselves and we are beginning to know that taxes are spent to keep people alive and healthy and in jobs and, to a minute extent, also to keep people cheerful, their minds alert, their spirits buoyant. The very fact that we are now *all* critics of spending is a great advance, because it means we are all paying; when we are all critics of foreign policy it will mean that we are all signing contracts with other nations; and when we are all critics of war, it will mean that we are all fighting.

As a student, I know what a layman can know about strategy; less about tactics; as a citizen I should be of greater service to my country if I knew more. What I have learned, from many sources, seems to hold together and to demonstrate one thing: behind strategy in the field is a strategy of a people in action; and victory comes to the leaders who organize and use the national forces in keeping with the national character.

I have gone to several authorities to discover whether the "tactics of variety" (a "natural" in propaganda) has any counterpart in the field. I cannot pretend that it is an accepted idea; it is hardly more than a name for an attitude of mind; but I did find authority for the feeling that an American (or

United Nations) strategy need not be—and must not be—the strategy of Hitler. So much the civilian can take to his bosom, for comfort.

### *A Variety of Strategies*

The greatest comfort to myself was in a little book published just in time to corroborate a few guesses and immensely to widen my outlook; it is called *Grand Strategy*; the authors are H. A. Sargeaunt, a specialist in poison gas and tank design, a scientist and historian; and Geoffrey West, biographer and student of politics; both British. Although there are some difficult pages and some odd conclusions, this book is a revelation—particularly it shows the connection between war and the social conditions of nations making war; in the authors' own words, "war and society condition each other"; they connect war with progress and show how each nation can develop a strategy out of its own resources. The hint we all got at school, that the French revolution is responsible for vast civilian armies, is carried into a history of the nineteenth century—and into this war.

The authors have their own names for each kind of war—each is a "solution" to the problem of victory. Each adds a special factor to the body of strategy known at the time, and this added special factor rises from the country which uses it—from its methods of production, its education, its religion, its banking and commercial habits, and its whole social organization. Napoleon's solution was based on the revolutionary enthusiasm of the French people; he added zeal, the intense application of force, speed of movement, repeated hammering, throwing in reserves. All of these things demand devotion, patriotic self-sacrifice, and these qualities had been created, for the French, by the Republic; they were not qualities known to the mercenaries and small standing armies of Napoleon's enemies.

Against Napoleon's total use of the strategy of force, the

British opposed a strength based on the way they lived; it was a sea-strength of blockade, but also on land they refused to accept the challenge of Napoleon. They would not come out (until they were ready at Waterloo) and let Napoleon find their weak spot for the exercise of his force. Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, but the turning point came years earlier at Torres Vedras in Spain; as Napoleon increased force, Wellington increased "persistence"; it is called the "strategy of attrition" and it means that Wellington's "aim was to wear down the enemy troops by inducing them to attack [where Wellington] could withdraw to take up positions and fight again."

Today, getting news of a campaign like Wellington's in Spain, the average man would repeatedly read and hear headlines of retreat; he would get the impression of an uninterrupted series of defeats. But the Peninsular War was actually a triumph for British arms. It was a triumph because Wellington refused to fight in any way not natural to the British; his masterly retreats did not disturb the "inborn toughness and phlegm, that saving lack of imagination" which makes the British, as these British authors say, "good at retreats". Moreover, this war of slow retreats gave Britain time to develop a tremendous manufacturing power, to organize the blockade of Napoleon and the merchant fleet for supply to Spain. The whole history of modern England, its acceptance of the factory system, its naval supremacy, its relation to the Continent, and its internal reforms—all rise from the kind of war Wellington made, and the kind he refused to make.

For the curious, the later "solutions" are: under Bismark and Moltke, increased training and use of equipment and material resources; under Hitler, "synchronized timing" (connected with air-power and the impossibility of large-scale surprise; also connected with "alertness and intelligence" in the individual soldier, a frightening development under a totalitarian military dictatorship); and finally, under Churchill, "the national sandbag defense", increasing "usable



morale and initiative". Sandbag defense gets its name from the battle of London; but it refers to all sorts of defensive operations—a bullet is shot into sand and the dislodged grains of sand form themselves again so that the next bullet has the same depth of sand to go through—unless the bullets come so fast in "synchronized timing" or blitzkrieg that the sand hasn't time to close over the gap again. The defense "demands that every person in the nation be capable of sticking to his task even without detailed orders from others, regardless of the odds against him and though it may mean certain death. *Every* person—not merely the trained minority. This happened at Dunkirk. . . ." At Dunkirk the grains of sand were hundreds of small yachts, motor boats, trawlers, coasting vessels, many of which were taken to the dreadful beach by civilians virtually without orders; some of them became ferry-boats, taking men off the shore to the transports which could not get close enough, going back and forth, without stop—the grains of sand reforming until an army was rescued.

These examples drive home the principle that a form or style of warfare must be found by each nation corresponding to the state of the nation *at that time*; the "psychology" of the nation may remain constant for a century, but the way to make war will change if the methods of production have changed. If the nation has lost (or won) colonies, if education has reached the poor, if child labor has ended (so that youths of eighteen are strong enough for tank duty), if women are without civil rights, if a wave of irreligion or political illiberality has swept over the country—if any vital change has occurred, the style of war must change also. Every social change affects the kind of war we can fight, the kind we must discover for ourselves if we are to defeat an enemy who has chosen his style and is trying to impose it on us. The analysis of Hitler's war-style must be left to experts; if its essence is "synchronized timing", our duty is to find a way of upsetting the time-table, not only by months, but by minutes. Possibly the style developed by Stalin can do both—by pulling back

into the vast spaces of Russia, Stalin created a battlefield without shape or definition, which may have prevented the correlation of the parts of Hitler's armies; by encouraging guerillas, he may have upset the timing of individual soldiers, tanks, and planes. The success of the Eighth Route Army in China was based on a totally different military style, the only completely Communist style on record; for the army was successful because it built a Communist society on the march, actually and literally, establishing schools, manufacturing arms, bearing children, and fighting battles at the same time, so that at the end of several years the army had extricated itself from a trap, crossed and recrossed miles of enemy territory, reformed itself with more men and arms than it had at the beginning—and had operated as a center of living civilization for hundreds of thousands.

The operations of Chiang Kai Chek against the Japanese are another example of rejecting the enemy's style; over the enormous terrain of China, the defending armies could scatter and hide from aircraft; the cities fell or were gutted by fire; but the people moved around them, the armies remained. Japan's attack on Britain and ourselves began with islands, where the lesson of China could not be applied; and the islands were dependencies, not free nations like China, so the psychology of defense was also different; in the opening phases there was no choice and the Japanese forced us to accept their way of making war. Their way, it appears, is appropriate to their beliefs, their requirements in food, their capacity to imitate Europe, and dozens of other factors, not precisely similar to ours. Their experience and outlook in life and ideas of honor may lead to the suicide bomber; ours do not. Our dive bombers feel no shame if they miss a target; they have a duty which is to save their ships and return for another try; it is against the whole natural tradition of the west that a man should kill himself for the honor of a ruler; we would not send out an army with orders to gain honor by death, as we prefer to gain honor by victory. So in the true sense it

would be suicidal for us to imitate the Japanese; our heroism-to-the-death is the arrival, at the final moment, of a last reserve of courage and devotion; it is not a planned bravery, nor a communal devotion, it is as private as liberty—or death.

Our heroism rises out of our lives. Our science of victory will have to be based on our lives, too, on the way we manufacture, play games, read newspapers, eat and drink and bring up children. It is the function of our high command to translate what we can do best into a practical military strategy. The civilian's function is to provide the physical and moral strength needed to support the forces in the field. Here the civilian is qualified to make certain demands, because we know where our intellectual and moral strength lies; we can work to keep the tactics of variety operative in the field of public emotion.

The next two chapters are a translation of the tactics of variety into terms of propaganda and its objective, which is unity of action.

## CHAPTER III

### United . . . . ?

WHEN I BEGAN TO WRITE THIS BOOK the unity "made in Japan" was beginning to wear thin; when I finished people were slowly accustoming themselves to a new question: they did not know whether an illusion of unity was better than no unity at all.

We know now that we were galvanized into common action by the shock of attack; but to recoil from a blow, to huddle together for self-protection, to cry for revenge—are not the signs of a national unity. Before the war was three months old it was clear that we were not united on any question; while we all intended to win the war, the new appeasers had arrived—who wanted to buy themselves off the consequences of war by not fighting it boldly; or by fighting only Japan; or fighting Japan only at Hawaii; we disagreed about the methods of warfare and the purpose of victory; there were those who wanted the war won without aid from liberals and those who would rather the war were lost than have labor contribute to victory; and those who seemed more interested in preventing profit than in creating munitions; it was a great chance "to put something over"—possibly the radicals could be destroyed, possibly the rich; possibly the President or his wife could be trapped into an error, possibly a sales tax would prevent a new levy on corporations, possibly labor could manoeuvre itself into dominance; the requirements of war could be a good excuse for postponing all new social legislation and sily dropping some of the less vital projects; and the inescapable regimentation of millions of people, the necessary propaganda among others, could be used as an opportunity for new social experiments and indoctrination. In these differences and in the bitterness of personal dislike,

people believed that the war could not be won unless their separate purposes were also fulfilled; our activities were not designed to fit with one another, and we were like ionized particles, held within a framework, but each pulling away from the others.

The attack on Pearl Harbor silenced the pacifists; not even the most misguided could suggest that the President had manoeuvred Japan into the attack; the direct cause of the war, including the war which Italy and Germany declared on us, was self-protection. We were not fighting for England, for the Jews, for the munition makers. But did we know what we *were* fighting for? The President had said that we did not intend to be constantly at the mercy of aggressors; and the Atlantic Charter provided a rough sketch of the future. But we did not know whether we were to be allied with Britain, reconstruct Europe, raise China to dominance in the Far East, enter a supernational system, withdraw as we did at the end of the last war, or simply make ourselves the rulers of the world.

Matching our casual uncertainty was the dead-shot clear-minded intention of our enemies—to conquer, to subjugate, to rule; by forgetting all other aims, eliminating all private purposes; by putting aside whatever the war did not require and omitting nothing necessary for victory; by making war itself the great social experiment, using war to destroy morals, habits and enterprises which did not help the war, destroying, above all, the prejudices, the rights, the character of civilized humanity as we have known them.

Have we a source of unity which can oppose this totality? According to Hitler, we have not: we are a nation of many races and people; we are a capitalist country divided between the rich and the poor; we break into political parties; we reject leadership; we are given up to private satisfactions and do not understand the sacrifices which unity demands.

Therefore, in the Hitlerian prophecy, America needs only to be put under the slightest tension and it will fall apart.

The strains under which people live account for their strength as well as their weakness; we are strong in another direction precisely because we are not "unified" in the Nazi sense. Actually the Nazis have no conception of unity; their purpose is totality, which is not the same thing at all. A picture or a motor has unity when all the *different* parts are arranged and combined to produce a specific effect; but a canvas all painted the same shade of blue has no unity—it is a totality, a total blank; there is no unity in a thousand ball-bearings; they are *totally* alike.

If the Nazi argument is not valid, why did we first thank Japan for unity, and then discover that we had no unity? Why were we pulling against one another, so that in the first year of the war we were distracted and ineffective, as France had been? If outright pacifism was our only disruptive element, why didn't we, after we were attacked, embrace one another in mutual forgiveness, high devotion to our country, and complete harmony of purpose? Months of disaster in the Pacific and the grinding process of reorganizing for production at home left us unaware of the sacrifices we had still to make, and at the mercy of demagogues waiting only for the right moment to start a new appeasement. Perhaps next summer, when the American people won't get their motor trips to the mountains and the lakes; perhaps next winter when coal and oil may not be delivered promptly; perhaps when the first casualty lists come in. . . .

We were not a united people and were not mature enough, in war years, to face our disunion. When we become mature we will discover that unity means agreement as to purpose, consent as to methods, and willingness to function. All the parts of the motor car have to do their work, or the car will not run well; that is their unity; and our unity will bring every one of us jobs to do for which we have to prepare. We can remember Pearl Harbor with banners and diamond clasps, but until we forget Pearl Harbor and do the work

which national unity requires of us, we will still be children playing a war game—and still persuading ourselves that we can't lose.

*The Background of Disunion*

In the urgency of the moment no one asked how it happened that the United States were not a united people. No one wondered what had happened to us in the past twenty years to make religious and racial animosities, political heresy-hunts, and class hatreds so common that they were used not only by demagogues, but by men responsible to the nation. No one asked whether the unity we had always assumed was ever a real thing, not a politician's device, for use on national holidays only. And, when the disunion of the people's leaders began to be apparent, and the people began to be ill-at-ease—then they were told to remember Pearl Harbor, or that we were all united really, but were helping our country best by constructive criticism. The fatal circumstance of our disunity we dared not face. No one who *could* unite the people was willing to work out the basis of unity—and everyone left it to the President, as if in the strain of battle, a general were compelled to orate to the troops. The President's work was to win over our enemies; it should not have been necessary for him to win us over, too.

The situation is grave because we have no tradition of early defeat and ultimate victory; we have no habit of national feeling, so that when hardships fall on us we feel alone, and victimized. We do not know what "all being in the same boat" really signifies; we will, of course, pull together if we are shipwrecked; but the better way to win wars is to avoid shipwrecks, not to survive them.

We cannot improvise a national unity; we can only capitalize on gusts of anger or jubilation, from day to day—these are the tactics of war propaganda, not its grand strategy. For our basic unity we have to go where it already exists, we

have to uncover a great mother-lode of the true metal, where it has always been; we have to *remind* ourselves of what we have been and are, so that our unity will come from within ourselves, and not be plastered on like a false front. For it is only the strength inside us that will win the war and create a livable world for us when we have won it.

We have this deep, internal, mother-lode of unity—in our history, our character, and our destiny. We are awkward in approaching it, because in the past generation we have falsified our history and corrupted our character; the men now in training camps grew up between the Treaty of Versailles and the crash of 1929; they lived in the atmosphere of normalcy and debunking; of the Ku Klux Klan and Bolshevism; of boom and charity; and it is not surprising that they were, at first, bewildered by the sudden demands on their patriotism.

### *Losing a Generation*

We have to look into those twenty years before we can create an effective national unity; what we find there is a disaster—but facing it is a tonic to the nerves.

What happened was this: for the first time since the Civil War, progressivism—our basic habit of mind—disappeared from effective politics. The moral fervor of the Abolitionists, the agrarian anger of the Populists, the evangelical fervor of William J. Bryan, the impulsive almost boyish Square Deal of Theodore Roosevelt, the studious reformism of Woodrow Wilson, all form a continuity of political idealism; from 1856 to 1920 a party, usually out of office, was bringing the fervor and passion of moral righteousness into politics. The passion was defeated, but the political value of fighting for morally desirable ends remained high; and in the end the wildest demands of the “anarchists” and enemies of the Republic were satisfied by Congresses under Roosevelt and Wilson and Taft.

This constant battle for progressive principles is one of the most significant elements in American life—and we have



unduly neglected it. James Bryce once wrote that there was no basic difference in the philosophy of Democrats and Republicans, and thousands of teachers have repeated it to millions of children; intellectuals have neglected politics because the corruption of local battles has left little to choose between the Vare machine in Philadelphia, the Kelly in Chicago, the Long in Louisiana. For many years, in the general rise of our national wealth, politics seemed relatively unimportant and "vulgar"; and the figure of the idealist and social reformer was always ludicrous, because the reformers almost always came from the land, from the midwest, from the heart of America, not from its centers of financial power and social graces.

So constant—and so critical—is the continuity of reformist politics in America, that the break, in 1920, becomes an event of extreme significance—a symptom to be watched, analysed and compared. Why did America suddenly break with its progressive tradition—and what was the result?

The break occurred because the reformist, comparatively radical party was in power in 1918 when the war ended; all radicalism was discredited by the rise of Bolshevism in Russia, with its implied threat to the sanctity of property. Disappointment in the outcome of the war, Wilson's maladroit handling of the League of Nations, and his untimely illness, doomed the Democratic Party to impotence and the Republicans to reaction, which is often worse. So there could be no effective, respectable party agitating for reform, for a saner distribution of the pleasures and burdens of citizenship; in the years that followed, certain social gains were kept, some laws were passed by the momentum gained in the past generation, but the characteristic events were the Ohio scandals, the lowering of income taxes in the highest brackets, the failure of the Child Labor Amendment, and the heartfelt, complete abandonment of America to normalcy—a condition totally abnormal in American history.

It is interesting to note that the only reformer of this period was the prohibitionist; the word changed meaning; a derisive echo clings to it still. The New Deal hardly ever used the word; and the reformers of the New Deal were called revolutionists because reform was no longer in the common language—or perhaps because reforms delayed *are* revolutionary when they come.

The disappearance of liberalism as an active political force left a vacuum; into it came, triumphantly, the wholly un-American normalcy of Harding and Coolidge and, in opposition, the wholly un-American radicalism of the Marxists; the Republicans gave us our first touch of true plutocracy and the Reds our most effective outburst of debunking. Between them they almost ruined the character of an entire generation.

For 150 years the United States had tried to do two things: first, allow as many people as possible to make as much money as possible and, second, prevent the rich from acquiring complete control of the Government. As each new source of power grew, the attempt to limit kept pace with it; under Jackson, it was the banking power that had to be broken; under Lincoln the manufacturing power was somewhat balanced if not checked by the grant of free land; the Interstate Commerce Commission regulated rates and reduced the power of the railroads; the Sherman Act, relatively ineffective, was directed against trusts; changes in tariff laws occasionally gave relief to the victims of "infant industries". Under Theodore Roosevelt the railroads and the coal mine owners were held back and a beginning made in the recognition of organized labor; under Wilson the financial power was seriously compromised by the Federal Reserve Act, and industrial-financial power was balanced, a little, by special legislation for rural banking; under Taft the Income Tax Amendment was passed and an effort made to deduct from great fortunes a part of the cost of the Government which protected those fortunes.

*Robbers and Pharisees*

The era of normalcy was unique in one thing, it made the encouragement and protection of great fortunes the first concern of Government. Nothing else counted. Through its executives and administrators, through cabinet members and those closest to the White House, normalcy first declared that no moral standard, no patriotism, no respect for the dead, should stand in the way of robbing the people of the United States; and so cynically did the rulers of America steal the public funds, that the people returned them to power with hardly a reproach.

The rectitude of Calvin Coolidge made his party respectable; his dry worship of the money power was as complete a betrayal as Harding's. He spoke the dialect of the New England rustic, but he was false to the economy and to the idealism of New England; his whole career was an encouragement to extravagance; he was ignorant or misled or indifferent, for he watched a spiral of inflated values and a fury of gambling, and helped it along; he refused even to admonish the people, although he knew that the mania for speculation was drawing the strength of the country away from its functions. Money was being made—and he respected money; money in large enough quantities could do no harm. Even after the crash, he could not believe that money had erred. When he was asked to write a daily paragraph of comment on the state of the nation, he was embarrassed; he had been the President of prosperity and he did not want to face a long depression; he asked his friends at Morgan and Company to advise him and they told him that the depression would be over almost immediately, so he began his writings, admitting that "the condition of the country is not good"; but the depression outlasted his writing and his life. By the usual process of immediate history, this singularly loquacious, narrow-minded, ignorant, and financially destructive President stands in public memory as the typical laconic Yankee

who preached thrift and probably would have prevented the depression if we had followed his advice.

His successor was a reformed idealist. He had fed the Belgians, looked after the commercial interests of American businessmen, and promised two cars in every American garage. At last plutocracy was to pay off in comfort—but it was too late. Not enough Americans had garages, not enough cars could be bought by the speculators on Wall Street, to make up for the lack of sales among the disinherited.

### *No More Ideals*

Normalcy was a debasement of the normal instincts of the average American; it deprived us of political morality, not only because it began in corruption, but because it ended with indifference; normalcy destroyed idealism, particularly the simple faith in ideals of the common man, the somewhat uncritical belief that one ought "to have ideals" which intellectuals find so absurd.

In the attack on American idealism, our relations with Europe changed and this reacted corrosively on the great foundations of American life, on freedom of conscience and freedom of worship, on the political equality of man. By the anti-American policy of Harding and Coolidge we lost the great opportunity of resuming communication with Europe; a generation grew up not only hostile to the nations of Europe ("quarrelsome defaulters" who "hired the money") but suspicious of Europeans who had become Americans. The Ku Klux Klan, Ford's and Coughlin's attacks on the Jews, Pelley's attacks on the Jews and the Catholics, and a hundred others—were reflections in domestic life of our withdrawal from foreign affairs.

### *Left Deviation*

Parallel to normalcy ran the stream of radicalism, its enemy. Broken from political moorings by the collapse of

Wilsonian democracy, progressives and liberals drifted to the left and presently a line was thrown to them from the only established haven of radicalism functioning in the world: Moscow. Not all American liberals tied themselves to the party line; but few found any other attachment. The Progressive Party of LaFollette vanished; the liberal intellectuals were unable to work into the Democratic Party; and, in fact, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected and called his election a victory for liberals, no one was more impressed than the liberals themselves. That the new President was soon to appear as a revolutionary radical was unthinkable.

What had happened to the constant American liberal tradition? What had rendered sterile the ancient fruitful heritage of American radicalism? The apoplectic committees investigating Bolshevism cried aloud that Moscow gold had bought out the American intellectuals, which was a silly lie; but why was Moscow gold more potent than American gold, of which much more was available? (American gold, it turned out, was busy trying to subsidize college professors and ministers of God, to propagandize against public ownership of public utilities.)

It was not the gold of Moscow, but the iron determination of Lenin that captivated the American radical. At home the last trace of idealism was being destroyed and in Russia a new world was being created with all the harshness and elation of a revolutionary action. The direction in America was, officially, *back* (to normalcy; against the American pioneering tradition of forward movement); the direction of Russia was forward—to the unknown.

Few reached Moscow; few were acceptable to the stern hierarchy of Communism; but all American liberal intellectuals were drawn out of their natural orbit by the attraction of the new economic planet. Most of them remained suspended between the two worlds—and in that unhappy state they tried to solace their homelessness by jeering at their homeland.

The American radical's turn against America was a new thing, as new as the normalcy which provoked it. In the 19th century a few painters and poets had fled from America; the politicians and critics stayed home, to fight. They fought for America, passionately convinced that it was worth fighting for. The Populists and later the muck-rakers and finally the Progressives were violent, opinionated, cross-grained and their "lunatic fringe" was dangerous, but none of them despised America; they despised only the betrayers of America: the railroads, the bankers, the oil monopolies, the speculators in Wall Street, the corrupt men in City Hall, the bribed men in Congress. It was not the time for nice judgments, not the moment to distinguish between a plunderer like Gould and a builder like Hill. What Rockefeller had done to *save* the oil industry wasn't seen until long after he had destroyed a dozen competitors; what the trust were doing to prepare for large-scale production and mass-distribution wasn't to be discovered until the trusts themselves were a memory.

So the radicals of 1880 and 1900 were unfair; they usually wanted easy money in a country which was getting rich with hard money; they wanted the farmer to rule as he had ruled in Jefferson's day, but they did not want to give up the cotton gin and the machine loom and the reaper and the railroads which were transferring power to the city and the factory. The radical seemed often to be as selfish and greedy as the fat Republicans who sat in Congress and in bankers' offices and juggled rates of interest and passed tariffs to make industrial infants fat also.

Yet the liberal-radical until 1920 was a man who loved America and wanted only that America should fulfill its destiny, should be always more American, giving our special quality of freedom and prosperity to more and more men; whereas the radical-critic of the 1920's wept because America was too American and wanted her to become as like Europe as we could—and not a living Europe, of course. The Europe

held before America as an ideal in the 1920's was the Europe which died in the first World War.

*Working Both Sides of the Street*

The radical attack on America completed the destruction begun by the plutocrats; they played into each other's hands like crooked gamblers. The plutocrat and the politician made patriotism sickening by using it to blackjack those who saw skullduggery corrupting our country; and the radical critic made patriotism ridiculous by belittling the nation's past and denying its future. The politicians supported committees to make lists of heretics, and tried to deny civil rights to citizens in minority parties; and the intellectuals pretended that the Ku Klux Klan was the true spirit of America; the plutocrats and the politicians murdered Sacco and Vanzetti and the radicals acted as if no man had ever suffered for his beliefs in France or England or Germany or Spain. The debasement of American life was rapid and ugly—and instead of fighting, the radical critic rejoiced, because he did not care for the America that had been; it was not Communist and not civilized in the European sense—why bother to save it?

In 1936 I summed up years of disagreement with the fashionable attitude under the (borrowed) caption, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*. Looking back at it now, I find a conspicuous error—I failed to bracket the politician with the debunker, the plutocrat with the radical. I was for the average man against both his enemies, but I did not see how the reactionary and the radical were combining to create a vacuum in American social and political life.

The people of the United States were—and are—"materialistic" and in love with the things that money can buy; but the ascendancy of speculative wealth in the 1920's was not altogether satisfying. More people than ever before gambled in Wall Street; but considering the stakes, the steady upswing of prices, the constant stories of success, the open boasting of

our great industrialists and the benign, tacit assent of Calvin Coolidge—considering all these, the miracle is that eight out of ten capable citizens did not speculate. The chance to make money was part of the American tradition—for which millions of Europeans had come to America; but it did not fulfill all the requirements of a purpose in life. It wasn't good enough by any standard; it allowed a class of disinherited to rise in America, a fatal error because our wealth depended on customers and the penniless are not good risks; and the riches-system could not protect itself from external shock. Europe began to shiver with premonitions of disaster, a bank in Austria fell, and America loyally responded with the greatest panic in history.

Long before the money-ideal crashed, it had been rejected by some of the American people. It would have been scorned by more if anything else had been offered to them, anything remotely acceptable to them. The longest tradition of American life was cooperative effort; the great traditions of hardship and experiment and progressive liberalism and the mingling of races and the creation of free communities—all these were still in our blood. But when the plutocrat and politician tried to destroy them by neglect or persecution, the intellectual did not rebuild them; he told us that the traditions had always been a false front for greed, and asked us to be content with laughing at the past; or he told us that nothing was good in the future of the world except the Russian version of Karl Marx.

*We L'arn the Furriner*

The crushing double-grip of the anti-Americans of the Right and Left was most effective in foreign affairs. Normalcy wanted back the money which Europe had hired, as President Coolidge said; and normalcy wanted to hear nothing more of Europe. At the same time the radical was basically internationalist; the true believer in Lenin was also revolu-



tionist. Sheer isolationism didn't work; we were constantly on the side lines of the League of Nations; we stepped in to save Germany and presumably to help all Europe; we trooped to the deathbed of old Europe (with the exchange in our favor); the sickness made us uneasy at last—but we could not break from isolation because normalcy and radicalism together had destroyed the common, and acceptable, American basis of friendly independent relations with Europe.

Internationalism, with a communistic tinge, was equally unthinkable; and presently we began to think that a treaty of commerce might somehow be "internationalist". Europe, meanwhile, broke into three parts, fascist, communist, and the victims of both, the helpless ones we called our friends, the "democracies". By 1932 economics had destroyed isolation and Hitler began to destroy internationalism. The American people had for twelve years shrunk from both, now found that it had no shell to shrink into—America had repudiated all duty to the world; it had tried to make the League of Nations unnecessary by a few pacts and treaties; it had flared up over China and, rebuffed by England, sunk back into apathy. It was uninformed, without habit or tradition or will in foreign affairs; without any ideal around which all the people of America could gather; and with nothing to do in the world.

The New Deal repaired some of the destruction of normalcy, but it could not allay the mischief and unite the country at the same time. Loyalty to the Gold Standard and devotion to the principle of letting people starve were both abandoned; the shaming moral weakness of the Hoover regime, the resignation to defeat, were overcome. The direct beneficiaries of the New Deal were comparatively few; the indirect were the middle and upper income classes. They saw President Roosevelt save them from a dizzy drop into revolution; a few years later the danger was over, and when the rich and well-born saw that the President was not going to turn con-

servative, they regretted being saved—thinking that perhaps the revolution of 1933 might have turned fascist, and in their favor.

These were extremists. The superior common man was not a reactionary when he voted for Landon or Willkie. After the Blue Eagle was killed by the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court was saved by resignations, the average American could accept ninety percent of the objectives of FDR—and ask only for superior efficiency from the Republican Party.

The newspapers of the country were violent; Martin Dies was violent; John L. Lewis was violent; but labor and radicals and people were *not* violent. We were approaching some unity of belief in America's national future when the war broke out.

### *Quarterback vs. Pedagogue*

The New Deal had no visible foreign policy, but President Roosevelt made up for it by having several, one developing out of the other, each a natural consequence of events abroad in relation to the state of public opinion at home. To a great extent this policy was based on the President's dislike of tyranny and his love for the Navy, a fortunate combination for the people of the United States, for it allied us with the Atlantic democracies and compeled us to face the prospect of war in the Pacific. So far as we were at all prepared to defend ourselves, we are indebted to the President's recognition of our position as a naval power requiring a friend at the farther end of each ocean, Britain in the Atlantic, Russia and China in the Pacific.

The President's policy, singularly correct, was not the people's policy. It was not part of the New Deal; it was not tied into domestic policies; it subsisted in a dreadful void. Mr. Roosevelt, who once called himself the nation's quarterback, never had the patient almost pedantic desire to teach the American people which was so useful to Wilson. The notes to Germany, scorned at the time, were an education in inter-

national law for the American people; by 1917 the people were aware of the war and beginning to discover a part in it for themselves. Mr. Roosevelt's methods were more spectacular, but not as patient, so that he sometimes alienated people, and he faced a wilier enemy at home; Wilson overcame ignorance and Roosevelt had to overcome deliberate malice, organized hostility to our system of government, and a true pacificism which has always been native to America. Racial, religious, and national prejudices were all practised upon to prevent the creation of unity; it was not remarked at the time that class prejudice did not arise.

The defect of Roosevelt's method led to this: the American people did not understand their own position in the world. The President had appealed to their moral sense when he asked for a quarantine of the aggressors; he appealed to fear when he cited the distances between Dakar and Des Moines; but he had no unified body of opinion behind him. The Republican Party might easily have nominated an isolationist as a matter of politics if not of principle; and it was a stroke of luck that politics (not international principles) gave the opportunity to Wendell Willkie. Yet the boldest move made by Mr. Roosevelt, the exchange of destroyers for bases, had to be an accomplished fact, and a good bargain, before it could be announced. Even Mr. Willkie's refusal to play politics with the fate of Britain did not assure the President of a country willing to understand its new dangers and its new opportunities.

Nothing in the past twenty years had prepared America; and the isolationists picked up the weapons of both the plutocrat and the debunker to prevent our understanding our function in a fascist world. The grossest appeal to self-interest and the most cynical imputation of self-interest in others, went together. There were faithful pacifists who disliked armaments and disliked the sale of armaments even more; but there were also those who wanted the profit of selling without the risk; there were the alarming fellow travelers who

wished America to be destroyed until they discovered the USSR wanted American guns. There were snide businessmen who wanted Hitler even more than they wanted peace, and a mob, united by nothing—except a passion for the cruelty and the success of the Nazis.

The spectacle of America arguing war in 1941 was painful and ludicrous and one sensed changes ahead; but it had one great redeeming quality, it was in our tradition of public discussion and a vast deal of the discussion was honest and fair.

The war did not change Americans over night. The argument had not united us; but in the first days we dared not admit this; we began a dangerous game of hypnotizing ourselves.

## CHAPTER IV

### “The Strategy of Truth”

THE CONSEQUENCES of building on a unity which does not exist are serious. We have discovered that all war is total war; we have also found that while our enemies lie to us, they do not lie to their High Commands.

Total war requires total effort from the civilian and we have assumed that, in America, this means enthusiasm for our cause, understanding of our danger, willingness to sacrifice, confidence in our leaders, faith in ultimate victory. We may be wrong; total effort in Germany is based more on compulsion and promise than on understanding. But we cannot immediately alter the atmosphere in which we are living. If we could, if our leaders believed that total effort could be achieved more quickly by lies than by truth, it would be their obligation to lie to us. In total war there is no alternative to the most effective weapon. Only the weapon must be effective over a sufficient length of time; the advantage of a lie must be measured against the loss when the lie is shown up; if the balance is greater, over a period of time, than the value of the truth, the lie still must be told. If we are a people able to recognize a lie too fast for it to be effective, the lie must not be used; if we react “correctly” to certain forms of persuasion (as, say, magazine ads and radio commercials), the psychological counterparts of these should be used, at least until a new technique develops.

This is a basis for “the strategy of truth” which Archibald MacLeish set in opposition to the Nazi “strategy of terror”. The opposition is not perfect because the Nazis have used the truth plentifully in spreading terror, especially by the use of moving pictures. Their strategy, ethically, is a mixture of truth and lies, in combination; practically speaking, this strat-

egy is on the highest ethical plane because it saves Nazi lives, brings quick victory, protects the State and the people. It is, however, ill-suited to our purposes.

*Ethics of Lying*

Mr. MacLeish is being an excellent propagandist in the very use of the phrase, "strategy of truth", which corresponds to the President's "solemn pact of truth between government and the people"; there are a hundred psychological advantages in telling us that we are getting the truth; but propaganda has no right to use the truth if the truth ceases to be effective. Lies are easier to tell, but harder to handle; in a democracy they are tricky and dangerous because the conditions for making lies effective have not been created; such conditions were created in Germany; they came easily in other countries where no direct relations between people and government existed.

Before propaganda can lie to us, safely and for our own preservation, honorably and desirably, it must persuade us to give up our whole system of communication, our political habits, our tradition of free criticism. This could be done; but it would be difficult; no propagandist now working in America is cunning and brutal enough to destroy our civil liberties without a struggle which would cost more (in terms of united effort) than it would be worth. We cannot stop in the middle of a war to break down one system of persuasion and create another; the frame of mind which advertising men call "consumer acceptance" is, as they know, induced by a touch of newness in a familiar framework; the new element catches attention but it has to become familiar before it is effective.

Our propagandists, therefore, must use the truth, as they incline to do, but they have to learn its uses. We gain prestige by advertising the truth, even though the use of truth is forced upon us; but we have not yet won approval of the suppression of truth. It is good to use truth as flattery ("You are brave enough to know the truth") but truth also creates

fear which (advertisers again know this) is a potent incentive to action. Finally, the use of truth requires the canalization of propaganda; it is too dangerous to be handled by everyone.

The propagandists of our cause include everyone who speaks to the people, sells a bond, writes, broadcasts, publishes, by executive order or private will; they vary in skill and in detailed purpose; they blurt out prejudices and conceal information useful to the citizen. They have not, so far as any one has discovered, lied to the people of America, contenting themselves at first with concealing the extent, or belittling the significance, of our reverses; presently the same sources began to abuse the American people for not being aware of the danger threatening them; and no one officially recognized the connection between ignorance and concealment.

*Maxims for Propagandists*

It is easy to mark down the detailed errors of propaganda. The more difficult work is to create a positive program; and it is possible that we have been going through an experimental period, while such a program is being worked out in Washington. A few of the requirements are obvious.

*Propaganda must be used.* Our government has no more right to deprive us of propaganda than it has to deprive us of pursuit planes or bombers or anti-aircraft guns or antitoxin. Propaganda is the great offensive-defensive weapon of the home front; if we do not get it, we should demand it. If what we get is defective, we should protest as we would protest against defective bombsights.

*Propaganda must be organized.* Otherwise it becomes a diffused babel of opinion.

*Propaganda must be unscrupulous.* It has one duty—to the State.

*Propaganda must not be confused with policy.* If at a given moment the Grand Strategy of the war absolutely requires us to offer a separate peace to Italy or to make war on Rumania, propaganda must show this need in its happiest light; if the

reverse is required, propaganda's job does not alter. Policy should not be made by propagandists and propagandists should have no policy.

*Propaganda must interact with policy.* If at a given moment, the Grand Strategy has a free choice between recognizing or rejecting a Danish Government-in-exile, the action which propaganda can use to best advantage is the better.

*Propaganda must have continuity.* The general principles of propaganda have to be worked out, and followed. The principle, in regard to direct war news, may be to tell all, to tell nothing, or to alter the dosage according to the temper of the people. The choice of *one* of these principles is of the gravest importance; it must be done, or approved, by the President. After the choice is made, sticking to one principle is the only way to build confidence. Except for details of naval losses, the British official announcements are prompt and accurate; the British people generally do not go about in the fear of hidden catastrophe. The Italian system differs and may be suited to the temper of the people; the Russian communiques are exactly adapted to Stalin's concept of the war: the Red soldier is cited for heroism, in small actions, the Germans are always identified as fascists, the vast actions of the entire front are passed over in a formal opening sentence. The German method has its source in Hitler; the announcements of action are rhetorical, contemptuous, and sometimes threatening; the oratory which accompanies the official statements has, for the first time, had a setback, since the destruction of the Russian Army was announced in the autumn of 1941, but no one has discovered any serious reaction as a result. The German people have been conditioned by action; and action has worked with propaganda for this result. The concentration camp, the death of free inquiry, and the triumph of Munich have been as potent as Goebbels' lies to prepare the German people for total war; so that they have not reacted against Hitler when a prediction has failed or a promise gone sour.



Each of these methods has been consistently followed. Our propagandists on the home front began with the knowledge that a great part of the country did not want a war; a rather grim choice was presented: to frighten the people, or to baby them. The early waverings about Pearl Harbor reflected the dilemma; the anger roused by Pearl Harbor gave time to the propagandist to plan ahead. The result has been some excellent and some fumbling propaganda; but no principle has yet come to light.

*Propaganda must supply positive symbols.* The symbol, the slogan, the picture, which unites the citizen, and inspires to action, can be created by an individual, but can only be made effective by correct propaganda. The swastika is a positive symbol, a mark of unity (because it was once a mark of the revolutionary outcast); we have no such symbol. Uncle Sam is a cartoonists' fiction, too often appearing in comic guises, too often used in advertising, no longer corresponding even to the actuality of the American physique. The Minute-man has an antique flavor but is not sufficiently generalized; he is a brilliant defensive symbol and corresponded precisely to the phase of the militia, an "armed citizenry" leaping to the defense of the country. With my prejudice it is natural that I should suggest the Liberty Bell as a positive symbol of the thing we fight for. It is possible to draw its form on a wall—not to ward off evil, but to inspire fortitude.

*Propaganda must be independent.* It is a fighting arm; it has (or should have) special techniques; it is based on researches, measurements, comparisons, all approaching a scientific method. It should therefore be recognized as a separate function; Mr. Gorham Munson, preceded by Mr. Edward L. Bernays in 1928, has proposed a Secretary for Propaganda in the Cabinet, which would make the direct line of authority from the Executive to the administrators of policy, without interference. The conflicts of publicity (aircraft versus Navy for priorities, for instance) will eventually force some organi-

zation of propaganda. The confusion of departmental interests is a constant drawback to propaganda, even if there is no direct conflict.

*Propaganda must be popular.* Since the first World War several new ways of approaching the American people have been developed. These have been chiefly commercial, as the radio and the popular illustrated magazine; the documentary moving picture has never been popular, except for the March of Time, but it has been tolerated; in the past two years a new type, the patriotic short, has been skilfully developed. The full length picture has hardly ever been used for direct communication; it is a "morale builder", not a propaganda weapon.

*Propaganda must be measured.* At the same time the method of the selective poll has been developed in several forms and a quick, dependable survey of public sentiment can be used to check the effectiveness of any propaganda. Recent refinements in the techniques promise even greater usefulness; the polls "weight" themselves, and, in effect, tell how important their returns should be considered. The objections to the polling methods are familiar; but until something better comes along, the reports on opinion, and notably on the fluctuations of opinion, are not to be sneered away. To my mind this is one of the basic operations of propaganda; and although I have no evidence, I assume that it is constantly being done.

### *Who Can Do It?*

An effective use of the instruments is now possible. We may blunder in our intentions, but technical blunders need not occur; the people who have used radio or print or pictures are skilled in their trade and they can use it for the nation as they used it for toothpaste or gasoline. And the people of America are accustomed to forms of publicity and persuasion which need not be significantly altered. Moreover, we can measure the rightness of our methods in the field, not by rejoicing over "mail response", or newspaper comment, but by

discovering exactly how far we have created the attitude of mind and the temper of spirit at which we aim.

The advertising agency and the sampler of public opinion can supply the groundwork of a flexible propaganda method. They cannot do everything, because certain objectives have always escaped them. But they are the people who have persuaded most effectively and reported most accurately the results of persuasion. They cannot create policy, not even the policy of propaganda; but they can propagandize.

All of this refers to propaganda at home. It need not be called propaganda, but it must *be* propaganda—the organized use of all means of communication to create specific attitudes, leading to—or from—specific action.

### *What Is Morale's Pulse?*

This is, of course, another way of saying that morale is affected by propaganda. I avoid the word “morale” because it has unhappily fallen into a phrase, “boosting morale”, or “keeping morale at a high level.” We have it on military authority that morale is an essential of victory, but no authority has told us how to create it, nor exactly to what high level morale should be “boosted”. The concept of morale constantly supercharged by propaganda is fatally wrong; it confuses morale with cheerfulness and leads to the dangerous fluctuations of public emotion on which our enemies have always capitalized.

Morale should be defined as a desirable and effective attitude toward events. As despair and defeatism are undesirable, they break up morale; as cheerfulness leads at times to ineffectiveness, it is bad for morale. To induce cheerfulness in the week of Singapore, the burning of the Normandie, and the escape of the German battleships from Brest, would have been the worst kind of morale-boosting; to prevent elation over a substantial victory would have been not quite so bad, but bad enough.

There is a “classic example” of the effect of belittling a vic-

tory. The British public first got details of the Battle of Jutland from the German announcement of a naval victory, including names and number of British vessels sunk. The first British communique was no more subdued than usual, but coming *after* the German claims and making no assertions of victory, taking scrupulous care to list *all* British losses and only positively observed German losses, the announcement pulled morale down—not because it gave bad news, but because it put a bad light on good news; it did not allow morale to be level with events. The best opinion of the time considered Jutland a victory lacking finality, but with tremendous consequences; and Churchill was called in as a special writer to do the Admiralty's propaganda on the battle after the mischief was done. The time element was against him for a belated explanation is never as effective as a quick capture of the field by bold assertion and proof. Mr. Churchill was himself belated, a generation later, when he first defended the Navy for letting the Gneisenau and Scharnhorst escape and then, a day later, asserted that the ships had been compelled to leave Brest and that their removal was a gain for the British. The point is the same in both cases: the truth or an effective substitute may be used; but it has to correspond to actuality. The Admiralty underplayed its statement at Jutland. Churchill over-explained the situation at Brest. Both were bad for morale.

### *The Hypodermic Technique*

The "shot-in-the-arm" theory of morale is a confession of incompetence in propaganda. For the healthy human being does not need sudden injections of drugs, not even for exceptional labors; and the objective of propaganda is to create an atmosphere in which the average citizen will work harder and bear more discomfort and live through more anxiety and suffer greater unhappiness *without considering his situation exceptional or abnormal*.

To "boost morale", to give the public a shot of good news

(or even a shot of bad news), is an attempt to make us live above our normal temperature, to speed up our heart-beat and our metabolism. War itself raises the level; and all we have to do for morale is to stay on the new level.

The principle that the citizen must not consider his situation exceptional is one of the few accepted by democratic and autocratic States alike. Hitler announces that until the war is over he will wear a simple soldier's uniform; Churchill refuses to accept a hoard of cigars; the President buys a bond. In every case the conspicuous head of a nation does what the average citizen has to do; and because each citizen is like his leader, all citizens are like one another. A unity is created.

### *Re-Uniting America*

This completes the circle which began with our need for unity, and proceeded through propaganda to morale. For the foundation of our war effort has to be unity and the base of good morale is the feeling of one-ness in the privations and in the triumphs of war. We can now proceed to some of the reasons for the breaks in unity, which propaganda has not seen, nor mended.

First, the propagandists have rejected certain large groups of Americans because of pre-war pacifism; second, they have failed to recognize the use to which isolationism can be put; third, they have not thought out the principles of free criticism in a democracy at war. To rehearse all the other forms of separatist action would be to recall angers and frustrations dormant now, just below the level of conscious action. Moreover, a list of the causes of separation, with a remedy for each, would repeat the error of civilian propaganda in the early phases of the war—it would still be negative, and the need now is to set in motion the positive forces of unity, which have always been available to us.

*The accord we need is for free and complete and effective action, for sweating in the heat and crying in the night when disaster strikes, for changing the face of our private world,*

*for losing what we have labored to build, for learning to be afraid and to suffer and to fight; it is an accord on the things that are vital because they are our life: what have we been, what shall we do, what do we want—past, present, future; history, character, destiny.*

The propaganda of the first six months of the war was not directed to the creation of unity in this sense; it was not concerned with anything but the immediate daily feeling of Americans toward the day's news; the civilian propagandists insisted that "disunity is ended" because all Americans knew what they were fighting for, so that it became faintly disloyal to point out that reiteration was not proof and that disunity could end, leaving mere chaos, a dispersed indifferent emotion, in its place. The end of dissension was not enough; unity had to be created, a fellow-feeling called up from the memory of the people, binding them to one another because it bound them to our soil and our heroes and our myths and our realities; and the act of creation of unity automatically destroyed disunion; when the gods arrive, not only the half-gods, but the devils also, depart.

### *Myth and Money*

Faintly one felt a lack of conviction in the propagandists themselves. They were afraid of the debunkers, under whose shadow they had grown up. They did not venture to create an effective myth. Myth to them was Washington's Cherry Tree, and Lincoln's boyish oath against slavery and Theodore Roosevelt's Wild West; so they could not, with rhetoric to lift the hearts of harried men and women, recall the truth-myth of America, the loyalty which triumphed over desertion at Valley Forge, the psychological miracle of Lincoln's recovery from self-abasement to create his destiny and shape the destiny of the New World; the health and humor and humanity of the west as Roosevelt remembered it. At every point in our history the reality had something in it to touch

the imagination, the heart, to make one feel how complex and fortunate is the past we carry in us if we are Americans.

The propagandists were also afraid of the plutocrats—as they were afraid of the myth, they were afraid of reality. They did not dare to say that America was an imperfect democracy whose greatness lay in the chance it gave to all men to work for perfection; they did not dare to say that the war itself must create democracy over again, they did not dare to proclaim liberty to this land or to all lands; in the name of unity they could not offend the enemies of human freedom.

Moreover, the propagandists for unity had to defend the Administration. The rancor of politics had never actually disappeared in America, during wars; it was barely sweetened by a trace of patriotism three months after the war began. As a good fight needs two sides, defenders of the President were as happy as his opponents to call names, play politics, and distress the country. The groundwork for defeating the nation's aims in war was laid before those aims had been expressed; and one reason why we could make no proclamation of our purpose was that our purpose was clouded over; we had not yet gone back to the source of our national strength; and we had not yet begun to use our strength to accomplish a national purpose.

We were effecting a combination of individual capacities—not a unity of will. We were adding one individual to another, a slow process: we needed to multiply one by the other—which can only be done in complete union of purpose.

Some of the weakness of propaganda rose from its mixed intentions: to make us hate the enemy, to make us understand our Allies, to harden us for disaster, to defend the conduct of the war, to make us pay, to assure us that production was terrific, and then to make us pay more because production was inadequate; to silence the critics of the Administration, to appease the men of violence crying for Vichy's scalp or the men of violence crying for formulation of war aims. All these

the imagination, the heart, to make one feel how complex and fortunate is the past we carry in us if we are Americans.

The propagandists were also afraid of the plutocrats—as they were afraid of the myth, they were afraid of reality. They did not dare to say that America was an imperfect democracy whose greatness lay in the chance it gave to all men to work for perfection; they did not dare to say that the war itself must create democracy over again, they did not dare to proclaim liberty to this land or to all lands; in the name of unity they could not offend the enemies of human freedom.

Moreover, the propagandists for unity had to defend the Administration. The rancor of politics had never actually disappeared in America, during wars; it was barely sweetened by a trace of patriotism three months after the war began. As a good fight needs two sides, defenders of the President were as happy as his opponents to call names, play politics, and distress the country. The groundwork for defeating the nation's aims in war was laid before those aims had been expressed; and one reason why we could make no proclamation of our purpose was that our purpose was clouded over; we had not yet gone back to the source of our national strength; and we had not yet begun to use our strength to accomplish a national purpose.

We were effecting a combination of individual capacities—not a unity of will. We were adding one individual to another, a slow process: we needed to multiply one by the other—which can only be done in complete union of purpose.

Some of the weakness of propaganda rose from its mixed intentions: to make us hate the enemy, to make us understand our Allies, to harden us for disaster, to defend the conduct of the war, to make us pay, to assure us that production was terrific, and then to make us pay more because production was inadequate; to silence the critics of the Administration, to appease the men of violence crying for Vichy's scalp or the men of violence crying for formulation of war aims. All these



things *had* to be done, promptly and effectively. They would have to be done no matter how unified in feeling we were; and they could not be done at all unless unity came first.

*Call Back the Pacifists*

Small purposes were put first because the propagandists suffered from their own success. They had gone ahead of all and had brilliantly been teaching the American people the meaning of the European war; they were among the President's most potent allies and they deserve well of the country; the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies and the other active interventionist groups were a rallying point for the enemies of Hitler, and a strong point for attack by all the pacifists. But the moment the aim of these committees was accomplished and war was declared, the first objective must have been the re-incorporation of the pacifist 40% of our population into the functioning national group. The actual enemies of the country soon declared themselves; the hidden ones could be discovered. The millions who did not want to go to war had to be persuaded first of all that *we* understood why *they* had been pacifists; we could not treat them as cowards, or pro-Germans, or Reds, or idiots. We needed the best of them to unite the country, and all of them to fight for it.

Our propagandists did not know how to turn to their advantage the constant, native, completely sensible pacifism of the American people, especially of the Midwestern Americans. If the history of the United States has meaning, the pacifism of the Midwest is bound to become dominant; our part in the first World War achieved grandeur because the people of the Middle West, at least, meant it to be a war to end war, a war to end pacifism also, because there would be no need for it. The people of the Middle West want our position in the world to keep us out of the wars of other nations; they saw no wars into which we could be drawn. They were wrong—but their instincts were not wrong. They do not believe that

the wars of the United States have been like the wars of other nations; nor that the United States must now look forward to such a series of wars as every nation of Europe has fought for domination or survival. This may be naive, as to the past and the future; but it is a naivete we cannot brush aside. It rises from too many natural causes. And the people of the Middle West may, if need be, fight to make their dream of peace come true; they will have to fight the American imperialists, whom they have fought before; and this time they will have new allies; for the pacifist of the Midwest will be joined by the pacifists of the industrial cities; and the great hope of the future is that the pacifists of America will help to organize the world after the war.

*They will not help if they remain isolationists; and they will remain isolationist, in the middle of a global war, until they are certain that a world-order they can join is to be the outcome of the war.* Again, our propagandists have to understand isolationism, an historic American tradition in one sense, a falsehood in another. Our dual relation to Europe is expressed in two phrases:

*We came from Europe.*

*We went away from Europe.*

For a time we were anti-European; now we are non-European; if Europe changes, we may become pro-European; but we can never be part of Europe. Isolation is half our story; communication the other. On the foundation of half the truth, the isolationist built the fairy tale of physical separation; the interventionist, on the basis of our communication with Europe, built more strongly—the positive overbore the negative. Yet the whole structure of our relation to Europe has to be built on both truths, we have to balance one strength with the other. We cannot make war or make peace without the help of the isolationists; and to jeer at them because they failed to understand the mathematics of air power and sea-

bases is not to reconcile them to us; nor, for that matter, is it peculiarly honest. For few of those who wanted us to go to war against England's enemy warned us that we should have to fight Japan also; and none, so far as I know, told us that the task of a two-ocean war might be for several years a burden of losses and defeat.

The defeat of pacifist isolationism was not accomplished by the interventionists, but by Japan. The interventionists, because they were better prophets, gained the appearance of being truer patriots; they were actually more intelligent observers of the war in Europe and more passionately aware of its meaning. But they can be trusted with propaganda only if they recognize the positive value of their former enemies, and do not try to create a caste of ex-pacifist "untouchables." That is the method of totality; it is Hitler declaring that liberals cannot take part in ruling Germany, and Communists cannot be Germans. Unity does not require us to destroy those who have differed with us, it requires total agreement as to aims, and temporary assent as to methods; we cannot tolerate the action of those who want Hitler to defeat us, just as the body cannot tolerate cells which proliferate in disharmony with other cells, and cause cancer. We cannot afford the time to answer every argument before we take any action, so temporary assent is needed (the Executive in war time automatically has it because he orders action without argument). In democratic countries we add critical examination after the event, and free discussion of future policy as correctives to error. None of these break into unity; none requires the isolation of any group except the enemies of the State.

The purpose of unity is effective action—more tanks and planes, delivered more promptly; more pilots, better trained; more people helping one another in the readjustments of war. It is part of the groundwork of morale; in a democracy it is based on reconciliation, not on revenge.

*The Limits of Criticism*

The pacifists and the isolationists are being punished for their errors if their legitimate emotions are not recognized as part of the natural composition of the American mind. Criticism presents a problem more irritating because it is constantly changing its form and because no principle of action has been evolved.

At one of the grimmest moments of the war, a correspondent of the *New York Times* wrote that “for a while not politics but the war effort appeared to have undergone an ‘adjournment’”. At another, the President remarked that he did not care whether Democrats or Republicans were elected, provided Congress prosecuted the war energetically, and comment on this was that the President wanted to smash the two-party system, in order to have a non-critical Congress under him as he had had in 1933.

Both of these items suggest that propaganda has not yet taught us how to criticize our government in war time. The desirable limits of criticism have not been made clear. Every attack on the Administration has been handled as if it were treason; and there has been a faint suggestion of party pride in the achievements of our factories and of our bombers. Neither the war nor criticism of the war can be a party-matter; and no party-matter can be tolerated in the path of the war effort. All Americans know this, but the special application of this loyalty to our present situation has to be clarified. It has been left obscure.

For the question of criticism is connected with the problem of unity in the simplest and most satisfying way. The moment we have unity, we can allow all criticism which rises from any large group of people. Off-center criticism, from small groups, is dangerous. It does not ask questions in the public mind, and its tendency is to divert energies, not to combine them; small groups, if they are not disloyal, are the price we pay for freedom of expression in war time; it is

doubtful whether, at present, any American group can do much harm; it is even a matter of doubt whether Eugene V. Debs or several opposition senators were a graver danger to the armies of the United States in 1917. Small groups may be tolerated or, under law, suppressed; large groups never expose themselves to prosecution, but their criticism is serious and unless it is turned to advantage, it may be dangerous.

The tendency of any executive, in war time, is to consider any criticism as a check on war effort. It is. If a commanding officer has to take five minutes to explain an order, five minutes are lost; if the President, or the head of OPM, has to defend an action or reply to a critic, energy is used up, time is lost. But time and energy may be lost a hundred times more wastefully if the explanation is not given, if the criticism is not uttered and grows internally and becomes suspicion and fear. Freedom of criticism is, in our country, a positive lever for bringing morale into logical relation to events. The victims of criticism can use it positively, their answers can create confidence; and best of all, it can be anticipated, so that it can do no harm.

But this is true only if the right to criticize is subtly transformed into a duty; if, in doing his duty, the citizen refuses to criticize until he is fully informed; if the State makes available to the citizen enough information on which criticism can be based. Then the substance and the intention of criticism become positive factors in our fight for freedom.

Since it is freedom we are fighting for.

Freedom, nothing else, is the source of unity—our purpose in the war, our reason for fighting. On a low level of survival we have forgotten some of our differences and combined our forces to fight because we were attacked; on the high level which makes us a nation we are united to fight for freedom, and this unites us to one another because it unites us with every American who ever fought for freedom. Most particularly our battle today unites us with those who first proclaimed liberty throughout the land.

## CHAPTER V

### The Forgotten Document

TO DISTRACT ATTENTION, to put people's minds on useless or bewildering projects is a bit of sabotage, in a total war. It is well enough to divert people, for a moment, so that they are refreshed; but no one has the right to confuse a clear issue or to start inessential projects or to ask people to look at anything except the job in hand.

For five minutes, I propose a look at the Declaration of Independence, because it is the one document essential to our military and moral success; it is the standard by which we can judge the necessity of all projects; and although our destiny, and the means to fulfill it, are written into it, the Declaration is the forgotten document of American history. We remember the phrases too often repeated by politicians and dreamers; we do not study the hard realistic plan of national action embodied in every paragraph of the instrument.

The famous phrases at the beginning give the moral, and revolutionary, reason for action; the magnificent ground plan of the character and history of the American people is explained in the forgotten details of the Declaration; and nothing in the conservative Constitution could do more than delay the unfolding of the plan or divide its fruits a little unevenly.

I suggest that the Declaration supplies the *motive* of action for today; the moment we understand it, we have a definition of America, a specific blueprint of what we have been, what we are, and what we can become—and the action necessary for our future evolves from this; moreover the unnecessary action is likewise defined. Our course before we were attacked and our plans for the world after the war may seem the mere play of prejudice and chance; but the destiny of

America will be determined not by the affections of one group or the fears of another, nor by hysteria and passion; our fate will be determined by the whole course of our history—and by our decision to continue its direction or to reverse it.

The rest of this book flows out of this belief in the decisive role of the Declaration, but it does not attempt to indicate a course of action in detail. For the sake of illustration I cite these instances.

*Q.* Should the U. S. try to democratize the Germans or accept the view that the Germans are a race incapable of self-government?

*A.* The history of immigration, based on the Declaration, proves that Germans are capable of being good and great democratic citizens.

*Q.* Can the U. S. unite permanently with any single nation or any exclusive group of nations?

*A.* Our history, under the Declaration, makes it impossible.

*Q.* Can the U. S. join a world federation regulating specific economic problems, such as access to raw materials, tariffs, etc.?

*A.* Nothing in the Declaration is against, everything in our history is for, such a move.

*Q.* Can the U. S. fight the war successfully without accepting the active principles of the Totalitarian States?

*A.* If our history is any guide, the only way we can *lose* the war is by failing to fight it in our own way.

I have already indicated the possibility that our whole military grand plan must be based on variety, which is the characteristic of America created by specific passages in the Declaration; I am sure that the whole grand plan of civilian unity (the plan of morale and propaganda) has to return to the leading lines of our history, if we want to act quickly, harmoniously and effectively; and the peace we make will be another Versailles, with another Article X in the Covenant, if we make it without returning to the sources of our strength.

So, if we want to win in the field and at home, win the war and the peace, we must be aware of our history and of the principles laid down in 1776 and never, in the long run, betrayed.

*To Whom It May Concern*

The Declaration is in four parts and all of them have some bearing on the present.

The first explains why the Declaration is issued. The words are so familiar that their significance is gone; but if we remember that days were spent in revision and the effect of every word was calculated, we can assume that there are no accidents, that the Declaration is precise and says what it means. Here is the passage:

*"When, in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."*

The first official utterance of America is based on *human necessity*—not the necessity of princes or powers.

It is the utterance of a people, not a nation. It invokes first Nature and then Nature's God as lawgivers.

It asks independence and equality—in the same phrase; the habit of nations, to enslave or be enslaved, is not to be observed in the New World.

And finally "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind"; the first utterance of America is addressed not to the nations of the world, but to the men and women who inhabit them.

*Human—people—Nature—Nature's God—mankind.*

These are the words boldly written across the map of America. A century and a half of change have not robbed one of them of their power—because they were not fad-words,



not the catchwords of a revolution; they were words with cold clear meanings—and they destroyed feudalism in Europe for a hundred and sixty years.

The practical application of the preamble is this: whenever we have spoken to the people of other nations, as we did in the Declaration, we have been successful; we have failed only when we have addressed ourselves to governments. The time is rapidly coming when our only communication with Europe must be over the heads of its rulers, to the people. It does not seem practical; but we shall see later that, for us, it has always been good politics.

### *The Logic of Freedom*

The next passage in the Declaration is the one with all the quotations. There can be little harm in reprinting it:

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experiences hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evidence a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to*

*throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former System of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world."*

Starting off with a rhetorical device—the pretense that its heresies are acceptable commonplaces, this long paragraph builds a philosophy of government on the unproved and inflammatory assumptions which it calls "self-evident". The self-evident truths are, in effect, *the terms agreed upon by the signers*. These signers now appear for the first time, they say "we hold", they say that, to themselves, certain truths are self-evident. The first three of "these truths" are some general statements about "all men"; the fourth and fifth tell why governments are established and why they should be overthrown. These two are the objective of the first three; but they have been neglected in favor of adolescent disputation over the equality of men at birth, and they have been forgotten in our adult pursuit of happiness which has often made us forget that life and liberty, no less than large incomes, are among our inalienable rights.

The historians of the Declaration always remind us of John Locke's principle that governments exist only to protect property; when States fail they cease to be legitimate, they can be overthrown; and Locke is taken to be, more than Rousseau, the inspiration of the Declaration. The Declaration, it happens, never mentions the right to own property; but the argument for revolution is essentially the same: when a government ceases to function, it should be overthrown. The critical point is the definition of the chief duty of a government. The Colonists, in the Declaration, said it is to secure

certain rights to all men; not to guarantee privileges granted by the State, but to protect rights which are born when men are born, in them, with them—inalienably theirs.

So the Declaration sets us for ever in opposition to the totalitarian State—for that State has all the inalienable rights, and the people exist only to protect the State.

The catalogue of rights is comparatively unimportant; once we agree that the State exists to secure inherent rights, the great revolutionary stride has been taken; and immediately we see that our historic opposition to Old Europe is of a piece with our present opposition to Hitler. The purpose of our State is not the purpose of the European States; we might work with them, side by side, but a chemical union would result only in an explosion.

There is one word artfully placed in the description of the State; the Declaration does not say that governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed. It says that governments instituted among men to protect their rights “derive their *just* powers from the consent of the governed”. Always realistic, the Declaration recognizes the tendency of governors to reach out for power and to absorb whatever the people fail to hold. The idea of consent is also revolutionary—but the moment “inalienability” is granted, consent to be governed *must* follow. The fascist state recognizes *no* inalienable right, and needs no consent from its people.

It is “self-evident”, I think, that we have given wrong values to the three elements involved. We have talked about the “pursuit of happiness”; we have been impressed by the idea of any right being ours “for keeps”, inalienable; and we have never thought much about the fundamental radicalism of the Declaration: that it makes government our servant, instructed by *us* to protect our rights. The chain of reasoning, as the Declaration sets it forth, leads to a practical issue:

All men are created equal—their equality lies in their having rights;

these rights cannot be alienated ;  
governments are set up to prevent alienation ;  
power to secure the rights of the people is given by the  
the people to the government ;  
and if one government fails, the people give the power to  
another.

So in the first three hundred words of the Declaration the purpose of our government is logically developed.

*Blueprint of America*

There follows first a general and then a particular condemnation of the King of England. This is the longest section of the Declaration. It is the section no one bothers to read ; the statute of limitations has by this time outlawed our bill of complaint against George the Third. But the grievances of the Colonials were not high-pitched trifles ; every complaint rises out of a definite desire to live under a decent government ; and the whole list is like a picture, seen in negative, of the actual government the Colonists intended to set up ; and the basic habits of American life, its great traditions, its good fortune and its deficiencies are all foreshadowed in this middle section. Here—for the sake of completeness—is the section :

*“He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.*

*“He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained, and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend them.*

*“He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.*

*“He has called together legislative bodies at places, unusual,*

*uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.*

*"He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.*

*"He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.*

Here I omit one "count", reserved for separate consideration.

*"He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.*

*"He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.*

*"He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.*

*"He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our legislatures.*

*"He has affected to render the Military Independent of and superior to the Civil power.*

*"He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: For protecting them by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world: For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of Trial by jury: For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses: For abolishing the free System of*

*English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: For suspending our own Legislatures and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.*

*"He has abdicated Government here by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.*

*"He has plundered our seas, ravished our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.*

*"He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.*

*"He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.*

*"He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms. Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attention from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our con-*

*nections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends."*

The eighteen paragraphs of denunciation fall into seven general sections:

The King has thwarted representative government;  
he has obstructed justice;  
he has placed military above civil power;  
he has imposed taxes without the consent of the taxed;  
he has abolished the rule of Law;  
he has placed obstacles in the way of the growth and prosperity of the Colonies;  
he has, in effect, ceased to rule them, because he is making war on them.

So the bill of complaint signifies these things about the Founders of our Country:

They demanded government with the consent, by the representatives, of the governed.

They cherished civil rights, respect for law, and would not tolerate any power superior to law—whether royal or military.

They wished for a minimum of civil duties, hated bureaucrats, wanted to adjust their own taxes, and were afraid of the establishment of any tyranny on nearby soil.

They wanted free trade with the rest of the world, and no restraints on commerce and industry.

They intended to be prosperous.

They considered themselves freemen and proposed to remain so.

These were the rights to which lovers of human freedom aspired in England or France; they were the practical appli-

cation of Locke and Rousseau and the Encyclopedists and the Roundheads. Little in the whole list reflects the special conditions of life in the colonies; troops had been quartered in Ireland, trial by jury suspended in England, tyrants then as now created their Praetorian guard or Storm Troops and placed military above civil rights, and colonies from early time had been considered as tributaries of the Mother Country.

### *The Practical "Dream"*

The American Colonists were about to break the traditions of European settlement, and with it the traditions of European government. And, with profound insight into the material conditions of their existence, they foreshadowed the entire history of our country in the one specification which had never been made before, and *could* never have been made before:

*"He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands."*

This amazing paragraph is placed directly after the sections on representative government; it is so important that it comes before the items on trial by jury, taxation, and trade. It is a critical factor in the history of America; if we understand it, we can go forward to understand our situation today. The other complaints point toward our systems of law, our militia, our constant rebellion against taxes, our mild appreciation of civil duties, our unswerving insistence upon the act of choosing representatives; all these are details; but this unique item indicates how the nation was to be built and what its basic social, economic, and psychological factors were to be.



This brief paragraph condemns the Crown for obstructing the two processes by which America was made:

Immigration

Pioneering

With absolute clairvoyance the Declaration sets Naturalization, which means political equality, in between the two other factors. Naturalization is the formal recognition of the deep underlying truth, the new thing in the new world, that one could *become* what one willed and worked to become—one could, regardless of birth or race or creed, *become an American*.

So long as the colonies were held by the Crown, the process of populating the country by immigration was checked. The Colonists had no "dream" of a great American people combining racial bloods and the habits of all the European nations. They wanted only to secure their prosperity by growing; they constantly were sending agents to Westphalia and the Palatinate to induce good Germans to come to America, one colony competing with another, issuing pamphlets in Platt-Deutsch, promising not Utopia with rivers of milk and honey, not a dream, but something grander and greater—citizenship, equality under the law, and land. Across this traffic the King and his ministers threw the dam of Royal Prerogative; they meant to keep the colonies, and they knew they could not keep them if men from many lands came in as citizens; and they meant to keep the virgin lands from the Appalachians to the Mississippi—or as much of it as they could take from the Spaniards and the French. So as far back as 1763, the Crown took over *all* title to the 250,000 square miles of land which are now Indiana and Illinois and Michigan and Minnesota, the best land lying beyond the Alleghenies. Into this territory no man could enter; none could settle; no squatters' right was recognized; no common law ran. Suddenly the natural activity of America, uninterrupted since

1620, stopped. The right of Americans to move westward and to take land, the right of non-Americans to become Americans, both were denied. The outcry from the highlands and the forest clearing was loud; presently the seaboard saw that America was one country, its true prosperity lay within its own borders, not across the ocean. And to make the unity clear, the Crown which had taken the land, now took the sea; the trade of the Colonies was broken; they were cut off from Europe, forbidden to bring over its men, forbidden to send over their goods. For the first time America was isolated from Europe.

So the British Crown touched every focal spot—and bruised it. The outward movement, to and from Europe, always fruitful for America, was stopped; the inward movement, across the land, was stopped. The energies of America had always expressed themselves in movement; when an artificial brake on movements was applied, friction followed; then the explosion of forces we call the Revolution.

And nothing that happened afterward could effectively destroy what the Revolution created. The thing that people afterward chose to call "the American dream" was no dream; it was then, and it remained, the substantial fabric of American life—a systematic linking of free land, free trade, free citizenship, in a free society.

A grim version of our history implies that the pure idealism of the Declaration was corrupted by the rich and well-born who framed the Constitution. As Charles Beard is often made the authority for this economic interpretation, his own account of the economic effects of the Declaration may be cited in evidence:

the great estates were broken up;

the hold of the first-born and of the dead-hand were equally broken;

in the New States, the property qualification was never accepted and it disappeared steadily from the old.

And the Ordinance of 1787, last great act of the Continental Congress, inspired by the Declaration, created the Northwest Territory, the heart of America for a hundred years, in a spirit of love and intelligence which the Constitution in all its wisdom did not surpass.

That is what the Declaration accomplished. It set in action *all* the forces that ultimately made America. The action rose out of the final section, in which, naming themselves for the first time as "Representatives of the United States of America", the signers declare that "these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States. . . ." In this clear insight, the Declaration says that the things separating one people from another have already happened—differences in experiences, desires, habits—and that the life of the Colonies is already so independent of Britain that the purely political bond must be dissolved.

*"WE, THEREFORE, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions do, in the Name, and by authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."*

So finally, as a unity of free and independent States, the new nation arrogates to itself four specific powers:

To levy war  
conclude peace  
contract alliances  
establish commerce.

Only these four powers, by name; the rest were lumped together, a vast, significant *et cetera*; but these were so much more significant that they had to be separately written down; three of them—war—peace—alliances—are wholly international; the fourth, commerce, at least partly so. The signers of the Declaration made no mistake; they wished to be independent; and in order to remain independent, they were fighting *against* isolation.

The error we must not make about the Declaration is to think of it as a purely domestic document, dealing with taxes and election of representatives and Redcoats in our midst; it is the beginning of our national, domestic life, but only because it takes the rule of our life out of English hands; and the moment this is done, the Declaration sets us up as an independent nation among other nations, and places us in relation, above all, to the nations of Europe.

At this moment our intercourse with the nations of Europe is a matter of life and death—death to the destroyer of free Europe or death to ourselves; but if we live, life for all Europe, also. Like parachute troops, our address to Europe must precede our armies; we have to know what to say to Europe, to whom to say, how to say it. And the answer was provided by the Declaration which let all Europe come to us—but held us independent of all Europe.

## CHAPTER VI

### “The Population of These States”

IN THE BACK of our minds we have an image labeled “the immigrant”; and it is never like ourselves. The image has changed from generation to generation, but it has never been accurate, because in each generation it is a political cartoon, an exaggeration of certain features to prove a point. We have to tear up the cartoon; then we can get back to the picture it distorts.

#### *English-Speaking Aliens*

The immigrant-cartoon since 1910 has been the South-European: Slavic, Jewish, Italian; usually a woman with a shawl over her head, her husband standing beside her, with slavic cheekbones or a graying beard; and eager children around them. This is not a particularly false picture of several million immigrants; among them some of the most valuable this country has had. But it erases from our mind the bare statistical fact that the largest single language group, nearly *one third of all* the immigrants to the United States, were English-speaking. For several decades, the bulk of all immigration was from Great Britain and Ireland. If one takes the three principal sources of immigration for every decade between 1820 and 1930, one finds that Germany and Ireland were among the leaders for sixty years; Italy for forty; Russia only thirty; the great Scandinavian movement to the middle west lasted a single decade; but Great Britain was one of the chief sources of immigration for seventy years, and probably was the principal source for thirty years more—from 1790 until 1820—during which time no official figures were kept.

Out of thirty-eight million arrivals in this country, about

twelve spoke the dominant tongue, and most of them were aware of the tradition of Anglo-Saxon self-government; some had suffered from British domination, more had enjoyed the fruits of liberty; but all knew what liberty and respect for law meant. Many of these millions fled from poverty; but most were not refugees from religious or political persecution. Many millions came to relatives and friends already established; and began instantly to add to the wealth of the country; many millions were already educated. The cost of their upbringing had been borne abroad; they came here grown, trained, and willing to work. They fell quickly into the American system, without causing friction; they helped to continue the dominance of the national groups which had fought the Revolution and created the new nation.

It is important to remember that they were, none the less, immigrants; they made themselves into Americans and helped to make America; they helped to make us what we are by keeping some of their habits, by abandoning others. For this is essential: the British immigrant, even when he came to a country predominantly Anglo-Saxon, did not remain British and did not make the country Anglo-Saxon. The process of change affected the dominant group as deeply as it affected the minorities. It was a little easier for a Kentish man to become an American than it was for a Serbian; but it was just as hard for the man from Kent to remain a Briton as it was for the Serbian to remain a Serb. Both became Americans. Neither of them tried to remake America in the mold of his old country.

*Who Asked Them to Come?*

The next image in our minds is a bad one for us to hold because it makes us feel smug and benevolent. It is the image of America, the foster-mother of the world, receiving first the unfortunate and later the scum of the old world. It is true that the oppressed came to America, and that in the forty million arrivals there were criminals as well as saints. The picture

is false not only in perspective, but in basic values. For in many generations, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the great inrush of Europeans, the United States actively desired and solicited immigration.

Obviously when people were eager to emigrate, the solicitation fell off; Irish famine and German reaction sent us floods of immigrants who had not been individually urged to come. But their fathers and elder brothers had been invited. The Colonies and the States in their first years wanted settlers and, as noted, wrote their need for new citizens into the Declaration; between two eras of hard times we built the railroads of the country and imported Irish and Chinese to help the Civil War veterans lay the ties and dig the tunnels; in the gilded age and again at the turn of the century, we were enormously expanding and again agents were busy abroad, agents for land companies, agents for shipping, agents for great industries which required unskilled labor.

Moreover, the Congress of the United States refused to place any restrictions upon immigration. The vested interest of labor might demand restrictions; but heavy industry loved the unhappy foreigner (the nearest thing to coolie labor we would tolerate) and made it a fixed policy of the United States not to discourage immigration. The only restriction was a technical one about contract labor. It did not lower the totals.

*America Was Fulfilment!*

The moment we have corrected the cartoon we can go back to fact without self-righteousness. The fact is that arrival in America *was* the end toward which whole generations of Europeans aspired. It did not mean instant wealth and high position; but it did mean an end to the only poverty which is degrading—the poverty which is accepted as permanent and inevitable. The shock of reality in the strike-ridden mills around Pittsburgh, on the blizzard-swept plains of the Dakotas, brought dismay to many after the gaudy promises

made by steamship agents and labor bosses. But in one thing America never failed its immigrants—the promise and hope of better things for their children. America was not only promises; America was fulfilment.

No one has measured the exact dollar-and-cents value of believing that the next generation will have a chance to live better, in greater comfort and freedom. In America this belief in the future was only a projection of the parallel belief in the present; it was a reaction against the European habit of assuming that the children would, with luck, be able to live where their parents lived, on the same income, in the same way. The elder son was fairly assured of this; war and disease and colonies and luck would have to take care of the others. The less fortunate, the oppressed, could not even hope for this much. At various times the Jew in Russia, the liberal in Germany, the Sicilian sulphur-miner, the landless Irish, and families in a dozen other countries could only expect a worse lot for their children; they had to uproot themselves and if they themselves did not stand transplanting, they were sure their children would take root in the new world.

And this confidence—which was always justified—became as much a part of the atmosphere of America as our inherited parliamentary system, our original town-meetings, our casual belief in civil freedom, our passion for wealth, our habits of movement, and all the other essential qualities which describe and define us and set us apart from all other nations.

The immigrant knew his children would be born Americans; for himself there was a more difficult and in some ways more satisfying fate: he could *become* an American. It was not a cant phrase; it had absolute specific meaning. The immigrant became in essence one of the people of the country.

As soon as he was admitted, he had the same civil rights as the native; within a few years he could acquire all the basic political rights; and neither the habits of the people nor the laws of the government placed anything in the way of social equality; the immigrant's life was his own to make.



This did not mean that the immigrant instantly ceased to be a Slav or Saxon or Latin any more than it meant that he ceased to be freckled or brunette. The immigrant became a part of American life because the life of America was prepared to receive him and could not, for six generations, get along without him.

*America Is Various*

During the years in which big business solicited immigration and organized labor attacked it, the argument about the immigrant took an unfortunate shift. The question was whether the melting pot was "working", whether immigrants could be Americanized. There were people who worried if an immigrant wore a shawl, when "old Americans" were wearing capes; (the "old Americans" wore shawls when they arrived, forty years earlier); it was "unfortunate" if new arrivals spoke with an "accent" different from the particular American speech developed at the moment. There were others who worried if an immigrant too quickly foreswore the costume or customs of his native land. Employers of unskilled labor liked to prevent superficial Americanization; sometimes immigrants were kept in company villages, deliberately isolated from earlier arrivals and native Americans; wages could be kept low so long as the newcomers remained at their own level of comfort, not at ours. Others felt the danger (foreseen by Franklin and Jefferson) of established groups, solidified by common memories, living outside the circle of common interests. The actual danger to the American system was that it wouldn't work, that immigrants coming in vast numbers would form separate bodies, associated not with America but with their homeland. (This is precisely what happened in Argentina, by the deliberate action of the German government, and it is not an invention of Hitler's. Thomas Beer reports that "in 1892 . . . a German imperialist invited the Reichstag to secure the . . . dismemberment of the United States by planting colonies of civilized Europeans"

within our borders, colonies with their own religious leaders, speaking their own language; German leaders never could accept the American idea of change; in Hitler's mind a mystic “blood” difference makes changing of nationality impossible.)

The first World War proved that the “new immigrants”, the masses from South Europe, as well as the Germans, could keep their ancient customs and be good Americans; then observers saw that their worries over “assimilation” were beside the point; because the essence of America's existence was to create a unity in which almost all variety could find a place—not to create a totality brooking no variation, demanding uniformity. In the flush of the young century William James, as typical of America as Edison or Theodore Roosevelt, looking about him, seeing an America made up of many combining into one, made our variety the base of his religious outlook. He had studied “the varieties of religious experience”, and he began, experimentally, to think of a universe not necessarily totalitarian. He saw us building a country out of diverse elements and found approval in philosophy. He saw infinite change; “it would have depressed him,” said a cynical and admiring friend, “if he had had to confess that any important action was finally settled”; just as it would have depressed America to admit that the important action of creating America had come to an end. James “felt the call of the future”; he believed that the future “could be far better, totally other than the past”. He was living in an atmosphere of transformation, seeing men and women becoming “far better, totally other” than they had been. He looked to a better world; he helped by assuring us that we need never have one King, one ruler, one fixed and unalterable fate. He said that there was no proof of the one single Truth. He threw out all the old totalitarians, and cast his vote for a pluralistic universe. We were building it politically every day; without knowing it, James helped to fortify us against the totalitarians who were yet to come.

This was, to be sure, not Americanization. It was the far more practical thing: becoming American. Americanization was something celebrated on "days"; it implied something to be done *to* the foreigners. The truth was that the immigrant needed only one thing, to be allowed to experience America; then slowly, partially, but consistently, he became an American. The immigrant of 1880 did not become an American of the type of 1845; he became an American as Americans were in his time; in every generation the mutual experience of the immigrant, naturalized citizens and native born, created the America of the next generation. And in every generation, the native born and the older immigrants wept because *their* America and their way of becoming American had been outmoded. The process passed them by; America had to be reborn.

So long as the immigrant thought of "taking out citizen papers" and the native born was annoyed by accents, odd customs, beards and prolific parenthood, the process of becoming American was not observed, and the process of Americanization seemed obvious and relatively unimportant.

The tremendous revolution in human affairs was hidden under social discords and economic pressures. People began to think it was time to slacken the flow of immigrants until we had absorbed what we had. Good land was scarce; foreigners in factions began to join unions; second-generation children grew up to be great tennis players and took scholarships; the pure costless joy of having immigrants do the dirty work was gone. The practical people believed something had to be done.

But the practical people forgot the great practical side—which is also the mystical side—of our immigration. For the first time since the bright days of primitive Christianity, a great thing was made possible to all men: they could become what they wished to become. As Peter said to the Romans, and Paul to the Athenians, that through faith and desire and grace they could become Christians, equal, in the eyes of

God, to all other Christians, so the apostles of Freedom spoke to the second son of an English Lord, to the ten sons of a Russian serf, to old and young, ignorant and wise, befriended or alone, and said that their will, their ambition, their work, and their faith could make of them true Americans.

The instant practical consequences of this new element in human history are incalculable. They are like the practical consequences of early Christianity, which can be measured in terms of Empires and explorations and Crusades. The transformation of millions of Europeans into Americans was like the conversion of millions of pagans to Christianity; it was accompanied by an outburst of confidence and energy. The same phenomena occurred in the Renaissance and Reformation, a period of conversion accompanied by a great surge of trade, invention, exploration, wealth, and vast human satisfaction.

This idea of becoming American, as personal as religion, as mystical as conversion, as practical as a contract, was in fact a foundation stone of the growth and prosperity of the United States. It was a practical result of the exact kind of equality which the Declaration invoked; it allowed men to regain their birthright of equality, snatched from them by tyrants. It persuaded them that they could enjoy life—and allowed them to produce and to consume. In that way it was as favorable to prosperity as our land and our climate. And it had other consequences. For, as it stemmed from equality, it went deep under the roots of the European system—and loosened them so that a tremor could shake the system entirely.

### *Change and Status*

For the European system stood against *becoming*; its objective was to remain, to be still, to stand. Its ancient greatness and the tone of time which made it lovely, both came from this faith in the steady long-abiding changelessness of human institutions. All that it possessed was built to endure for ever;

its cathedrals, its prisons, its symbols, its systems—including the symbols and the systems by which it denied freedom to its people. Each national-racial-religious complex of Europe was a triple anchor against change; it prevented men from drifting as the great winds of revolution and reform swept over Europe. Nor were men permitted to change, as they pleased. Nations waged war and won land, but neither the Czars nor the German Emperors thought of the Poles as their own people; the Poles were irrevocably Poles, excluded from the nobler society of Russians, Austrians and Germans. Religious societies made converts, but looked with fear or hatred or suspicion against the very people from whom the converts came—the Jew was irretrievably a Jew, the Catholic a Catholic. In each country one religion was uppermost, the rest tolerated. In each country one folk-group was dominant, the rest tolerated or persecuted. And in each country one class—the same class—ruled, and all other classes served.

By ones or twos, men and women might be accepted into the established church, marry into the dominant race, rise to the governing class; but the exceptions proved nothing. The European believed in his *station* in life, his civil *status*, the *standing* of his family in the financial or social world. The Englishman settling in Timbuctoo remained an Englishman because the Englishman at home remained a middle-class bank clerk or “not a gentleman” or a marquess; and while an alien could become a subject of the King, he never for a moment imagined that he could become an Englishman—any more than a Scot. The English knew that names change; men do not.

*Only when they came to America, they did.*

They did because the basic American system, the dynamics of becoming American, rejected the racialism of Europe; it rejected aggressive nationalism by building a new nation; it rejected an established religion; and almost in passing it destroyed the class-system.

To the familiar European systems of damnation—by original sin, by economic determinism, by pre-natal influence—has been added a new one—damnation by racial inferiority; the Chamberlain-Wagner-Nietzsche-Rosenberg-Hitler myth of the superior race-nation means in practise that whoever is not born German is damned to serve Germany; there is no escape because the inferiority is inherent. This is the European class-system carried to its loftiest point.

We say that this system is inhuman, unscientific, probably suicidal. The poverty-system on which Europe “prospered” for generations and into which we almost fell, was also inhuman, unscientific and probably suicidal; there is no logic in the British aristocratic system coupled with a financial-industrial overlordship and universal suffrage; there is little logic even in our own setup of vast organizations of labor, huge combinations of money, unplumbed technical skill hampered by both capital and labor, and some forty million underfed and half sick human beings in the most productive land in the world. It is not logic we look for in the framework of human society; we look for operations. What does it do? For all its failures, our system works toward human liberty; for all its success, the Nazi system works against human liberty. We tend to give more and more people an opportunity to change and improve; their system is based on the impossibility of change. Our system is a nation built out of many races; theirs is a nation excluding all but one race. Our system has lapses, we do not grant citizenship to certain Orientals nor social equality to Negroes; but we do not write racial inferiority into our laws, we do not teach it in *our* schools (it may be taught in sectional schools we tolerate, but do not support); and this is important. So long as we accept the ideal of political equality, hope lives for every man. The moment we abandon it, we nazify ourselves—and destroy the foundation of the Republic.

*Americans All*

Turning from the brutal leveling and uniformity of the Nazis, good Americans have begun to wish that more of the folk qualities of our settlers had been preserved. At every point America is the enemy of fasci-feudalism, and this is no exception. Our music, our dancing, the language we speak, the foods we eat, all incorporate elements brought from Europe; but we have not deliberately encouraged the second generation to preserve clothes and cooking any more than we have encouraged the preservation of political habits. There has been a loss in variety and color; and now, while there is still time, efforts are being made to create a general American interest in the separate cultures combined here. It has to be carefully done, so that we do not lose sight of the total American civilization in our enthusiasm for the contributing parts. There is always the chance that descendants of Norwegians, proud and desperate as they consider the plight of their country, will become nationalistic here; and that they will not be interested in the music or the art of Ukrainians in America; and that Americans of Italian descent may be the only ones concerned in adding to the Italian contribution to American life. This is the constant danger of all work concerned with immigrant groups; and the supersensitiveness of all these groups, in a period of intense 100%-ism, tends to defeat the purpose of assaying what each has done to help all the others.

Yet some success is possible. In 1938 I worked with the Office of Education on a series of broadcasts which drew its title from the President's remark to the Daughters of the American Revolution, that we are all the descendants of immigrants. (The President also added "and revolutionaries", but this was not essential in our broadcasts.) Everything I now feel about the focal position of the immigrant in American life is developed from the work done on the Immigrants All series and, especially, from the difficulties en-

countered, as well as from one special element of success.

I set down some basic principles: that the programs would not *glorify* one national group after another; that the interrelation of each arriving group to the ones already here would be noted; the vast obligation of every immigrant to those who had prepared the way would be stressed; cooperation between groups would be dramatically rendered if possible; the immigrants' contribution to America would be paralleled by America's contribution to the immigrant; and the making of America, by its natives and its immigrants, would overshadow the special contribution of any single group.

These were principles. In practise, some disappeared, but none was knowingly violated. From time to time, enthusiasts for a given group would complain that another had been more warmly treated; more serious was the indifference of many leaders of national and folk groups to the general problem of the immigrant, to any group outside their own. We were, by that time, in a period of sharpened national sensibilities; but this did not entirely account for an apparently ingrained habit of considering immigrant problems as problems of one's own group, only. Suspicion of other groups went with this neglect of the problem as a whole; the natives born with longer American backgrounds were the ones who showed a clearer grasp of the whole problem; they were not bothered by jealousies and they were interested in America.

On the other side, the series had an almost spectacular success. More than half of the letters after each weekly broadcast came from men and women who were *not* descendants of the national group presented that week. After the program on the Irish, some 48% of the letters were from Irish immigrants or native-born descendants of the Irish; the other 52% came from children of Serbs and FFV's and Jews and Portuguese, from Sicilians and Germans and Scots, Scandinavians and Englishmen and Greeks. It was so for all of the programs; the defects of the scripts were forgotten, because the people who heard them were so much better Americans



than anyone had dared predict. Of a hundred thousand letters, almost all were American, not sectarian in spirit; the bitterness of the cheap fascist movements had not affected even a fringe of the listeners. All in all, we were encouraged; it seemed to us that the immigrant was accepted as the co-maker of America.

Much of our future depends on the exact place we give to the immigrant. It has been taken for granted that immigration is over and that the proportions of racial strains in America today are fixed for ever. It is not likely that vast immigration will head for the United States in the next decade; but the principle of "becoming American" will operate for the quotas and the refugees; and it is now of greater significance than ever because the great fascist countries have laid down the principle of unchangeable nationality. The Nazi government has pretended a right to call German-born American citizens to the colors; and a regular practise of that government is to plant "colonies" as spies.

If we do not re-assert the principle of change of nationality (the legal counterpart to the process of becoming American) we will be lost in the aggressive nationalism of the Nazis, and we will no longer be safe from racialism. Preposterous as it will seem to scholars, degrading as it will be to men of sense, racialism can establish itself in America by the re-assertion of Anglo-Saxonism (with variations).

### *Are We Anglo-Saxon?*

At this point the direct political implications of "becoming American" become evident. Toward the end of this book there are some questions about union with Britain; the point to note here is that so far as Union-now (or any variant thereof) is based emotionally on the Anglo-Saxonism of the United States of America, it is based on a myth and is politically an impossible combination; if we plan union with Britain, let it be based on the actuality of the American status,

not on a snobbish desire. We cannot falsify our history, not even in favor of those who did most for our history.

There is a way, however, of imputing Anglo-Saxonism to America, which is by starting with the great truth: the English and the Scots—and the Scots-Irish—founded the first colonies (some time after the Spaniards to be sure, but that is “a detail”); they established here certain basic forms of law and cultivated the appetite for freedom; they were good law-abiding citizens, and accustomed to self-discipline; they were great pioneers in the wilderness; they suffered for religious liberty and more than any other national or racial group, they fought the War of Independence.

Can we say these men created the true, the original America; and everything since then has been a corruption of its 100% goodness and purity? This would allow us to rejoice in Andrew Carnegie, but not in George W. Goethals; in Hearst but not in Pulitzer; in Cyrus McCormick but not in Eleuthère Dupont; in the Wright Brothers, but not in Boeing and Bellanca; in Edison (partly as he was not all Scot) but not in his associate Berliner; in Bell who invented the telephone but not in Pupin who created long distance. We should have to denounce as un-American the civil service work of Carl Schurz and Bela Schick’s test for diphtheria and Goldberger’s work on pellagra (which was destroying the pure descendants of the good Americans); we would have to say that America would be better off without Audubon and Agassiz and Thoreau; or Boas and Luther Burbank; or John Philip Sousa and Paul Robeson and Jonas Lie.

When we have denied all these their place in America, we can begin to belittle the contribution of still others to our national life. For the later immigrants had less to give to transportation and basic manufactures and to building the nation. These things were done by the earlier immigrants. The later ones gave their sweat and blood, and presently they and their children were troubling about education, or civil

service, or conservation of forests, or the right of free association, or art or music or philanthropy. If our own special fascists lay their hands on our traditions, the burning of books will be only a trifle; for they will tear down the museums and the settlement houses, the kindergartens and the labor temples—and when they are done they will say, with some truth, that they have purged America of its foreign influence. All reform, all culture will be destroyed by the New Klansmen, and they will re-write history to make us believe that wave after wave of corruption came from Europe (especially from Catholic and Greek Orthodox and Jewish Europe) to destroy the simple purity of Anglo-Saxon America.

That is why, now, when we can still assess the truth, when we need the help of every American, we must declare the truth, that there never was a purely Anglo-Saxon United States. Frenchmen and Swedes and Spaniards and Negroes and Walloons and Hollanders and Portuguese and Finns and Germans and German Swiss were here before 1700; Quakers, Catholics, Freethinkers and Jews fought side by side with Huguenots, Episcopalians, Calvinists and Lutherans in the wars with the Indians. In the colony of Georgia, in the year Washington was born, men of six nations had settled: German Lutherans, Italian Protestants, Scots, Swiss, Portuguese, Jews and English. In 1750 four times as many Germans arrived in Pennsylvania as English and Irish together.

### *The Creative Anglo-Saxon*

The greatness of the Anglo-Saxon contribution to America—the gift greater than all their other great gifts—was the conception of a state making over the people who came here, and made over by them. By the end of the Revolution, power and prestige were in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon majority; and in three successive instruments they destroyed the idea of Anglo-Saxon superiority: the Declaration of Independence,

the Ordinance of 1787, the Constitution. “Becoming” was not an ideal and it was not the base of Anglo-Saxon society in England; the concept of change and “becoming” was based on actuality; on what was happening all over the colonial dominion. People were becoming American, even before a new nation was born.

All that followed—the vast complexity of creating America, would have been impossible without that first supreme act of creative self-sacrifice. When the statesmen of our Revolutionary period established the principles of statehood and naturalization and citizenship in terms of absolute equality, they knew the risk they ran. In Pennsylvania the official minutes were printed in both English and German; in Maryland the Catholics were dominant; there were still some influential Dutch along the upper Hudson who might secede from New York. On the western boundary, unsettled, uneasy, lay the Spaniards and the French. There was danger of division, everywhere; but the great descendants of the English immigrants did not withdraw. Their principle was equality; since men were born free, they could *become* equal if artificial barriers were removed. The statesmen of that day declared for America; they knew that men did not, in this country, remain Dutch or Portuguese; but grew into something else. With their own eyes they had seen it happen. They pledged their lives and sacred honor that it would happen again.

So, if ever we re-write history to prove that all the other nations contributed nothing and failed to become Americans, we will also have to write it down that the Anglo-Saxons failed more miserably than the others. For the great idea, the practical dynamics of equality, was theirs; they set it in motion, guarded it, and saw it triumph.

In the next ten years it will be impossible to extemporize an immigration policy for the United States. The world economy will change all around us: the dreadful alternations

of plenty and starvation may be adjusted and controlled; we may enter a world order in which we will be responsible for a given number of souls, and some of these may be admitted to our country. By that time we will have learned that nationalist fascism and international communism are powerless here; and no one but professional haters of America will be left to bait the foreigners and persecute the alien.

But above all, by that time we will have had time to reassert the great practical idea behind immigration and naturalization—the idea of men making themselves over—as for a century and a half they have made themselves into Americans.

### *An Experiment in Evolution*

NOTE: I have used the phrase “becoming American” and defined it as it defined itself; legally, in the customs of the country, it seems to mean becoming a citizen; experimentally “becoming” has happened to us, we have seen it happen, it means that we recognize an essential affinity between an immigrant and Americans, living or dead.

Yet to many people the words may be vague; to others they may seem a particularly dangerous lie. Those who are interested in certain foreign groups, less promptly “Americanized”, will protest that for all this “becoming”, some are not accepted as American; those who are basically haters of all foreigners will say that the *law* accepts citizens, but no power on earth can make them Americans.

It is my experience that the phrases created by poets, politicians and people are often the truest words about America; and one of the profound satisfactions of life is to see the wild imagery of the poet or the lush oratory of the politician come true, literally and exactly true, scientifically demonstrated and proved.

In this particular case, absolute proof is still lacking, because we are dealing with human beings, we cannot make controlled experiments. We can observe and compare. Under

the inspiration of the eminent anthropologist Dr. Franz Boas, the research has been made; so far as it goes it proves that the children of foreigners do become Americans. Specifically, their gestures, the way they stand and the way they walk, their metabolism and their susceptibility to disease, all tend to become American. In all of these aspects, there is an American norm or standard; and the children of immigrants forsaking the norm or standard of the fatherland, grow to that of America.

The most entertaining of these researches was in the field of gesture. The observers took candid movie shots of groups of Italians and of Jews; they differ from one another and both differ from the American mode (which is a composite, with probably an Anglo-Saxon dominant). The observers found that the extreme gesture of the foreign-born Jew is one in which a speaker gesticulates with one hand while with the other he holds his opponent's arm, to prevent a rival movement; and one case was noted in which the speaker actually gesticulated with the other man's arm. To the American of native stock this is "foreign"; and research proves that the American is right; such gestures are foreign even to the American-born children of the foreigner himself. The typical foreign gesture disappears and the typical American gesture takes its place.

And this is not merely imitation; it is not an "accent" disappearing in a new land. Because metabolism and susceptibility to disease are as certainly altered as gait and posture. The vital physical nature changes in the atmosphere of liberty—as the mind and the spirit change.

The frightened lie of racial doom which has fascinated the German mind (under its meaner guise of racial superiority) was never needed in America. Seeing men become Americans, the fathers of our freedom declared that nothing should prevent them; they were not afraid of any race because they knew that the men of all races would become Americans.

Their faith of 1776 begins to be scientifically proved today; a hundred and sixty-six years of creative America proved it in action.

It is on the basis of what Europeans became in America, that we now have to consider our relations with the Europeans who remained in Europe.

## CHAPTER VII

### Address to Europe

THE COMMUNICATIONS of America and Europe have always run in two channels: our fumbling, foolish diplomacy, our direct, candid, successful dealings with the people.

Our first word was to the people of Europe; the Declaration of Independence tried to incite the British people against their own Parliament; and the "decent respect to the opinions of mankind" refers to citizens, not to chancelleries. The Declaration was addressed to the world; it was heard in Paris and later in a dozen provinces of Germany, and in Savoy and in Manchester, and presently along the Nevski and the Yellow River. Since 1776, the people of the world have always listened to us, and answered. We have never failed when we have spoken to the people.

After the Declaration, the American people spoke to all the people of Europe in the most direct way: they invited Europeans to come here, offering them land, wages, freedom; presently our railroads and steamship lines solicited larger numbers; and the policy of the government added inducements. Free immigration, and free movement, demanded in the Declaration, made possible by laws under the Constitution, were creating America. In domestic life we saw it at once; but the effects of immigration on our dealings with Europe were not immediate.

We need only remember that for a hundred and twenty years the peoples of Europe and the people of the United States were constantly writing to one another; not merely doing business together, but exchanging ideas, mingling in marriage, coming together as dispersed families come together. Whatever went on in the Mississippi Valley was known along the fjords and in the Volga basin and by the



Danube; if sulphur was discovered in Louisiana it first impoverished Sicily—then brought Sicilians to Louisiana; Greeks knew that sponges were to be found off Tampa. And more and more people in America knew what was happening in Europe—a famine, a revolution, a brief era of peace, a repressive ministry, a reform bill. The constant interaction of Europe and America was one beat of our existence—it was in counterpoint to the tramp of the pioneer moving Westward; immigration and migration meshed together.

Our government from time to time spoke to the governments of Europe. A tone of sharp reproof was heard at times, a warm word for revolutionaries was coupled with indignation against tyrants: Turkey, the Dual Monarchy, the Tsar, all felt the lash—or Congress hoped they felt it; in the Boer War, England was the victim of semi-official criticism; and whenever possible, we were the first to recognize republics, even if they failed to maintain themselves on the ruins of monarchy. We fluttered official papers and were embarrassed by protocol, not believing in it anyhow, and were outwitted or out-charmed by second-rate diplomatists of Europe.

### *People and Protocol*

The campaign platforms always demanded a “firm, vigorous, dignified” diplomacy; the diplomacy of Europe was outwardly correct, inwardly devious, shifting, flexible, and in our opinion corrupt. But our address to the *people* of Europe was, in all this time, so candid, so persuasive, that we destroyed the chancelleries and recaptured our losses. The first great communication, after 1776, was made by Lincoln—it was not a single speech or letter, it was a constant appeal to the conscience of the British people, begging them, as the Declaration had done, to override the will of their rulers. And this appeal also was successful; few events in our relations with England are more moving than the action of the starving Midlanders. Their government, like their men of wealth and birth, like their press and parliament, were eager

to see America split, and willing to see slavery upheld in order to destroy democracy. But the men and women of Manchester, starved by the Northern blockade of cotton, still begged their government not to interfere with the blockade—and sent word to Lincoln to assure him that the *people* of Britain were on the side of liberty, imploring him “not to faint in your providential mission. While your enthusiasm is aflame, and the tide of events runs high, let the work be finished effectually. Leave no root of bitterness to spring up and work fresh misery to your children.” Nor did Lincoln fail to respond; Americans who could interest Britain in the northern cause were unofficial ambassadors to the people; and our minister, Charles Francis Adams labored with all sorts and conditions of men to make the government of Britain accept the will of the British people. The Emancipation Proclamation was a final step in the domestic statesmanship of the war; it was also a step in the diplomacy of the war, for it insured us the good will of the British people; and that good will was vital to the success of the Union. The North was coming close to war with the *government* of Britain, and the people’s open prejudice in favor of Lincoln and freedom kept England from sufficient aid to the Confederacy.

The next address of the United States to the people of Europe is a long tragedy, its consequences so dreadful today that we can barely analyze the steps by which the great work for human freedom was destroyed.

### *Wilson to the World*

Following the precedent of the Declaration, Woodrow Wilson began in 1916 to address himself to the people of the nations at war in Europe. To ministries, German and British both, Wilson was sending expostulations on U-boats and embargos; to the peoples of Europe he addressed those speeches which were made at home; presently he wrote inquiries to the ministers which they were compelled to make public (since publication in neutral countries was certain).

Then, after the Soviets of Russia had gone over the heads of the Foreign Offices, to appeal to the workers of the world, Wilson carried his own method to its necessary point and, after we entered the war, began the masterly series of addresses to the German people which were so effective in creating the atmosphere of defeat.

They created at the same time the purposes of allied victory. The war ended and one of the magnificent spectacles of modern times occurred: the people of Europe were for a moment united, and they were united by an American declaring the objectives of American life. The moment was so brief that few knew all it meant until it had passed; in the excitement of spectacles and events, of plots and processions, this moment when Europe trembled with a new hope passed unnoticed.

What happened later to Woodrow Wilson is tragic enough; but nothing can take away from America this great moment in European history—to which every observer bears testimony, even the most cynical. The defeated people of Germany saw in America their only defence against the rapacity of Clemenceau, the irresponsible, volatile opportunism of Lloyd George, the crafty merchandising of Orlando; the first “liberal” leader, Prince Max, had deliberately pretended acceptance of the fourteen points in order to embarrass Wilson; but he spoke the truth when he said that Wilson’s ideals were cherished by the overwhelming majority of the German *people*; and quite correctly the Germans saw that nothing but American idealism stood between them and a peace of vengeance. The enthusiasm of the victorious peoples was less selfish, but it was equally great; a profound distrust of their leaders had grown in the minds of realistic Frenchmen and Britons, they sensed the incapacity of their leaders to raise the objectives of the war above the level of the “knockout blow” or the *revanche*. As the Germans cried to be protected in their defeat, the victorious people asked to be protected from such fruits of victory as Europe had known for a thou-

sand years. The demagogues still shouted hoarsely for a noose for the Kaiser and the old order in Germany began to plan for the next time—but the people of Europe were united; they had gone through the same war and, for the first time in their history, they wanted the same peace. It was the first time that an American peace was proposed to them.

*How Wilson Was Trapped*

Woodrow Wilson made a triumphal tour of the allied capitals and by the time he returned to Paris for the actual business of the peace, he had become the spiritual leader of the world. He was not, however, the political leader of his own country—he had lost the Congressional elections and he allowed the diplomats of Europe to make use of this defeat. They began to cut him off from the people of Europe; he fell into the ancient traps of statesmanship, the secret sessions, the quarrels and departures; once he recovered control, ordered steam up in the George Washington to take him home; but in the end he was outguessed—in the smart word, he was outsmarted. He had imagined that he could defeat the old Europe by refusing to recognize its intrigues. He had, in effect, declared that secret treaties and all commitments preceding the fourteen points couldn't exist; he had hoped that they would be cancelled to conform to his pious pretence of ignorance. And Clemenceau and Lloyd George kept him quarreling over a mile of boundary or a religious enclave within a racial minority; they stirred passions; they starved German children by an embargo; they rumored reparations; they promised to hang the Kaiser; they drew Wilson deeper into smaller conferences; they promised him a League about which their cynicism was boundless, and he let them have war guilt and reparations and the betrayal of the Russian revolution and the old European system triumphant. They had fretted him and tried him and they had made their own people forget the passionate faith Wilson had inspired; they made Wilson the agent of disillusion for all

that was generous and hopeful in Europe. They could do it because the moment Wilson began to talk to the premiers, he stopped talking to the people. From the moment he allowed the theme of exclusive war guilt to be announced, he cut himself off from all Germany; he did not know the temper of the working class in Europe, and he refused to listen to the men he himself had sent to report on Russia, which did not help him with the radical trade unions in France or the liberals in England. One by one the nations fell back into their ancient groove, the Italians sullenly nursing a grievance, the French whipping up a drama of revenge and memory in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, the British "isolating" themselves in virtual control of the Continent, everybody frightened of Russia—and everyone still listening for another word of honest truth from Wilson, who was silent; for America was starting on a long era of isolation from Europe (the first in a century), an aberration in American life, against all its actual traditions, in keeping only with its vulgar oratory.

*The Excommunication of Europe*

The United States had no obligations to the nations which emerged out of the Treaty of Versailles, only a human obligation to their people to keep faith with them. The people of Germany believed in all fervor that they had gained an armistice and sought peace on the basis of the fourteen points; the people of France and England believed that their own governments had accepted the same points. And the same people might have been stirred to insist on a peace of reconciliation—not with princes and ministers, but with peoples—if Wilson and the Americans had continued to communicate with them.

We withdrew into a stuffy silence. Just as we played a queer game of protocol and refused to "recognize" the USSR, so we sulked because the old bitch Europe wasn't being a gentleman—the only communication we made to Europe was when we dunned her for money. We have seen how the years of Harding and Coolidge affected our domestic life;

they were not only a reaction against the fervor of the war months; they were a carefully calculated reaction against basic American policy at home and abroad; they betrayed American enterprise, delivered industry into the hands of finance, degraded government, laughed at corruption, and under the guise of "a return to normalcy" attempted to revive the dead conservatism of McKinley and Penrose in American politics.

In this period, it is no wonder that we failed to utter one kind word to help the first democratic government in Germany, that we trembled with fear of the Reds, sneered at British labor until it became respectable enough to send us a Prime Minister, and excluded more and more rigorously the people of Europe whose blood had created our own.

Slowly, as the depression of 1929-32 squeezed us, we began to see that our miseries connected us with Europe; it was a Republican president who first attempted to address Europe; but Mr. Hoover's temperament makes it difficult for him to speak freely to anyone; the talks with Ramsay MacDonald were pleasurable; the offer of a moratorium was the first kindness to Europe in a generation of studied American indifference. It failed (because France still preferred to avenge herself on Germany); and thereafter we had too many unpleasant things to do at home.

### *One Good Deed*

We had, in the interval, spoken once to all the world. On the day the Japanese moved into Manchuria we had, in effect, notified the British that we chose not to accept the destruction or dismemberment of a friendly nation. The cynical indifference of Sir John Simon was the first intimation of the way Europe felt about American "idealism". It was also the first step toward "non-intervention" in Spain and the destruction of Europe at the hands of Adolf Hitler. When we were rebuffed by Downing Street, we sulked; we did not attempt to speak to the people of Asia, or try to win the British

public to our side. We had lost the habit. We were not even candid in our talks with the Chinese whose cause we favored because we had Japan (and American dealers in oil and scrap iron) to appease.

In 1933 Adolf Hitler was elected leader of a Germany which had been out of communication with us for a generation. The United States which had been in the minds of generations of Germans, was forgotten by the people. In a few years Hitler had overthrown the power of France on the Continent, challenged Communism as an international force, and frightened the British Empire into an ignoble flutter of appeasement.

To that dreary end our failure of communication had tended. We were the one power which might have held Europe together—in a League, in a mere hope of friendship and peace between nations, in the matrix of the fourteen points if nothing more. The moment we withdrew from Europe, its nations fell apart, not merely into victors and vanquished, but into querulous, distrustful, and angry people, each whipped into hysteria by demagogues or soothed to complaisance by frightened ministers.

The obligation to address Europe is no longer a moral one. For our own security, for the cohesion of our own people, for victory over every element that works to break America into hostile parts—now we have the golden opportunity again, to speak to Europe, and to ask Europe to answer. As we look back on our ancient triumphs with the peoples of Europe and the sour end to which we let them come, this new chance is heaven-sent, undeserved, as if we could live our lives over again. And it is nearly so—for if we want to have a life to live in the future, if it is still to be the confident, secure life of a United America, we must speak now to Europe.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Science of Short Wave

WHAT WE SAY TO EUROPE is to be an incitement to revolution, a promise of liberation, a hope of a decent, orderly, comfortable living, in freedom; but it must be as hard and real and un-dreamlike as the Declaration, which was our first word to the people of the world.

We have to begin by telling all the peoples of Europe, our friends and our enemies, what they have done for America, and what America has done for them. We have to destroy the slander that the Italians were kept at digging ditches, the Yugoslavs in the mills, the Hungarians and Poles and Czechs in the mines and at the boilers, the Greeks at the fruit stands; we must destroy the great lie that all the "lesser races" whom Hitler now enslaves were first slaves to our economic system. We can begin by reading the roster of the great names, the men who came to America and were liberated from poverty and prejudice, and made themselves fame or wealth, and deserved well of the Republic, and were honored.

#### *38 Million Freeman*

Directly after the great names, we have to tell the story of the nameless ones, the thirty-eight million who came here and suffered the pains of transportation, but took root and grew, understanding freedom as it came to them, making their way in the world, becoming part of America, deprived of no civil rights, fighting against exploitation with other Americans, free to fight against oppression, and with a fair chance of winning.

There is no need to prettify the record; the record, as it stands, in all its crude natural colors, is good enough. The immigrant was exploited, greedily and brutally; and twenty



years later he or his sons exploited other immigrants in turn, as greedily and brutally as the law allowed.

The ancient passions of race and ritual were not dead in America; but they were never embodied into law, nor entirely accepted by custom; and as the unity of America was enriched by the blood of more races and nations, prejudice had to be organized, it had to be whipped up and put on a profit basis, as the Klan did, or it would have died away.

*The New World was New*

For nearly a hundred and fifty years the peoples of Europe wanted to come to America; they knew, from those who were already here, what the plight of the foreigner was in Pittsburgh or in Tontitown, on Buzzards Bay or Puget Sound. They knew that outlanders were sometimes mocked and often cheated; that work was hard in a new land; that those who came before had chosen the best farms and worked themselves into the best jobs; they knew that for a time life would be strange, and even its pleasures would be alien to them. They knew, in short, that America was not the New Eden; but they also knew that it *was* the New World, which was enough. We have no apologies to make to the immigrant; except for those incivilities which people often show to strangers. Our law showed them nothing but honor and equity. The errors we made were grave enough; but as a nation we never committed the sin of considering an immigrant as an alien first, and then as a man. The economic disadvantages he suffered were the common misfortunes of alien and native alike. We could have gained more from our immigrants if we and they were not in such haste to slough off the culture they brought us. But we can face Europe with a clear conscience.

What we have to say to Europe is not only that "we are all the descendants of immigrants"; we go forward and say that the hunkie, the wop, the bohunk, the big dumb Swede, the yid, the Polack, and all the later immigrants, created

billions of our wealth, built our railroads and pipe lines and generators and motor cars and highways and telephone systems; and that we are getting our laws, our movies, our dentistry, our poems, our news stories, our truck gardening, and a thousand other necessities of life, from immigrants and from first generation descendants of immigrants; and that they are respected and rewarded, as richly as a child of the DAR or the FFV's would be in the same honored and needed professions; we have to give to Europeans statistical proof of their fellow-countrymen's value to us, and cite the high places they occupy, the high incomes they enjoy, the high honors we give them; all these things are true and have to be said, so that Europe knows why America understands her people, why we can, without smugness or arrogance, talk to all the people of Europe.

And when that is said, we have to say one thing, harder to say honorably and modestly and persuasively:

*That all these great things were done because the Europeans who did them were free of Europe, because they had ceased to be Europeans and become Americans.*

### *The Soil of Liberty*

This is the true incitement to revolution. Not that nations need Americanize themselves; the image of Freedom has many aspects, and the customs in which freedom expresses itself in France need not be the same as those in Britain or Germany. But the base of freedom is unmistakable—we know freedom as we know pure air, by our instincts, not by formula or definition. And it was the freedom of America which made it possible for forty million men and women to flourish, so that often the Russian and the Irish, the Bulgar and the Sicilian, the Croatian and the Lett, expressed the genius of their country more completely in America than their contemporaries at home; because on the free soil of America, they were not alien, they were not in exile. One can ask what was contributed to medicine by any Japanese who

remained at home, comparable to the work of Noguchi or Takamine in America; or whether any Spaniard has surpassed the clarity of a Santayana; any Czech the scrupulous research of a Hrdlicka; any Hungarian the brilliant, courageous journalism of a Pulitzer; any Serb the achievements of Michael Pupin. The lives of all peoples, all over the world, are incalculably enriched by men set free to work when they came to America. And, it seems, only to America. The warm hospitality of France to men of genius did not always work out; Americans and Russians and Spaniards and English flocked to Paris and became precious, or disgruntled; they felt expatriated; in America men from all over the world felt repatriated, it was here they became normal, and natural, and great.

Beyond this—which deals with great men and is flattering to national pride—we have to say to the men and women of Europe that their own people have created democracy, proving that no European need be a slave. The great lie Hitler is spreading over the world is that there are “countries which love order”, and that they are by nature the enemies of the Anglo-Saxon democracies. It is a lie because our democracy was created by all these “order-loving” peoples; America is Anglo-Saxon only in its origin; the answer to Hitler is in what all the people of Europe have created here.

They have also annihilated the myth of race by which Hitler's Germany creates a propaganda of hatred. *All* the peoples of Europe have lived together in amity in America, all have intermarried. Nothing in America—not even its crimes—can be ascribed to one group, nation, or race. Even the KKK, one suspects, was not 100% Aryan.

As the world has seen the German people, for the second time in twenty years, support with enthusiasm a regime of brutal militarism, a sinister retrogression into the bestiality of the Dark Ages, people have wondered whether the German people themselves may not be incapable of civilization. Their eagerness to serve any master sufficiently ignorant, if

they can brutalize people weaker than themselves, is a pathological strain. Their quick abandonment of the effort at self-government is sub-adolescent. So it seems.

*Germans As Freemen*

If it is so, then the great triumph of America is that in America even the Germans have become good citizens, lovers of liberty, quick to resent dictation. They have fought for good government from the time of Carl Schurz; for freedom of the press since the days of Zenger; they have hated tyranny and corruption since the time of Thomas Nast; they have fought for the oppressed since the time of Altgeld. Of the six million Germans who emigrated, the vast majority were capable of living peaceably and serviceably with their fellow-men. Of these six, one million fled from reactionary governments after the democratic revolution of 1848 had failed, millions of others came to escape the harsh imperialism of victorious Germany after 1870. To them, the Germany of the Kaiser was undesirable, the Germany of Hitler unthinkable. Yet their countrymen, left behind, tolerated one and embraced the other with sickening adulation. It is as if America had drawn off the six million Germans capable of understanding and taking part in a democratic civilization, leaving the materials for Hitlerism behind.

In any case, the Germans in America have proved that Hitler lies to the Germans; they are neither a superior race nor a people incapable of self-government; they will not rule the world, nor be a nation of slaves.

*The Brotherhood of the Oppressed*

We can say this to the Germans, destroying their illusions and their fears at one stroke. How much more we can say to the great patient peoples whom Germany now enslaves! They have seen the German conquest of Continental Europe; the ascendancy of the Teutonic-Aryan is complete. What can the Norwegian or the Bulgar or the Rumanian believe,

except that there is a superior race—and it is not his own?

Fortunately for us, the European has never ceased to believe in America, in us. Not as a military race, not as a race at all; but as people of incredible good fortune in the world. And we can say to every man who has bowed his head, but kept his heart bitter against Hitler, that we have the proof of the equal dignity of every man's soul, a proof which Hitlerism can never destroy. We can say to the Greeks who see the swastika over the Parthenon and the Norwegian whose bed is stripped of its comforters, and to the Serb still fighting in the mountain passes, the one thing Hitler dares not let them believe—that they are as good as other men. We have the proof that under liberty Croats and Finns and Catalans and Norwegians are as good as Germans—because they are men, because under liberty there is no end to what they and their children may accomplish.

If we ever again think that this is oratory, we shall lose our greatest hope of a free world. The orators were too often promising too much because they were betraying America on the side; still they could not falsify the truth which the practical men and the poets both had discovered: *America means opportunity*. Now we can see the vast implications of the simple assertion. Because America meant opportunity, we can incite riot against Hitler in the streets of Oslo and Prague and even in Vienna; we have proved that given opportunity, freed of artificial impediments, men walk erect, do their work, collaborate to rule over and be ruled by their fellow-men; and that there is no master race, no master class.

This is our address to the people of Europe—that we believe in them, because we know them. We know they can free themselves because they have shown the instincts of free men here; we know they are destined to create a free Europe.

The people of Europe have to know that we are their friends. It will be hard for us to make some of them believe it—as the French did not believe it when we failed to break the British blockade in their favor. But we must persuade

them—we have their brothers and mothers and sons here to speak for us.

It was not easy for Woodrow Wilson to speak to the Germans and the Austrians. He had no radio; his facilities for pamphleteering were limited. But he succeeded. Our task is formidable enough; because the radio is so guarded, it may be harder for us to reach the captured populations. But it can be done and will be, as soon as we see how necessary the job is.

### *Our First Effective Front*

We have a job with Germans and Italians, too. Not with Germany and Italy, which must be defeated; not with their rulers who must be annihilated; but with the people, the simple, ignorant masses of people, the day laborers and the housewives; and with the intelligent section of the middle class which resisted fascism too little and too late, but never accepted it. We have to revive the spirit of moderate liberation which fell so ignominiously between Communism and fascism; and we have to restore communication with the Socialists in Dachau, the Communist cells in Italy and Germany.

I am not trying to predict the form of our propaganda. We shall probably try to scare our enemies and to cajole them; to prove them misled; to promise them security if they revolt. None of these things will be of much use if we forget to tell *the people* that their brothers are here with us—and that we are not enemies. It has seemed to us in the past year that we have a quarrel with more of the German people than we had in 1918; we are contemptuous of the Italians; but it is still our business to distinguish between the Storm Troopers and their unfortunate victims, between the lackeys of fascism and the easy-going Italian peasant who never knew what had hit him. There are millions of Germans and Italians in America, who were once exactly like the Germans and Italians in Europe; they have undergone the experience of

liberty while their brothers have been enslaved ; but we must be hard-headed enough to know that our greatest potential allies, next to the embittered captives of the Nazi regime, are the Italians and Germans who could not come to America in the past twenty years.

The golden opportunity of talking to the people of Europe before we went to war has been missed. Now it is harder for us, but it is not impossible. We have to counter the despair of Europe with the hope of America. The desperation of the occupied territories rises from the belief that the Germans are invincible and that they themselves are doomed to servility ; to that we reply with the argument of war—but in the first part of our war, the argument will be hard to follow ; we shall be pushed back, as the British were, because we are not yet ready for the offensive ; so for a year perhaps our very entrance into the war will tend to increase the prestige of our enemies. Therefore, in this time, we must use other powers, our other front, to touch sources of despair : our counter-propaganda must rebuild the self-respect of the Europeans, of those who resisted and were conquered and even of those who failed to resist. We can send them the record of heroism of their fellow-countrymen in our armies ; if we can reach them, we should smuggle a sack of flour for every act of sabotage they commit ; and we should send them at once a rough sketch, if not a blueprint, of a post-war world in which they will have a part—with our plans for recovering what was stolen from them, rebuilding what was destroyed, and restoring the liberty which in their hearts they never surrendered.

And there is a special reason why we must speak promptly. We have to declare our unity to Europe in order to destroy the antagonisms which our enemies will incite at home. It will be good fascist propaganda to lead us to attack Americans of German and Italian birth or parentage ; our enemies will say that the unity of America is a fraud, that we have only welcomed Italians and Germans to make them support

the Anglo-Saxon upper classes—and that “good Europeans” can never become good Americans. The moment we give any pretext for this propaganda, our communication with *all* of Europe is lost.

*Short Wave to Ourselves*

We cannot afford to lose our only immediate weapon. We have to anticipate the Italo-German blow at our national unity by our own attack, led by Italians and Germans who are Americans. We have to remain united so that we can deal effectively with Europe and every time we speak to Europe, we can reinforce the foundations of unity at home. We have not achieved a perfect balance of national elements, and in the past few years we have tolerated fascist enemies, we have seen good Americans being turned into fascists and bundists while our leaders made loans to Mussolini or dined with Goering and came back to talk of peace. It is possible that a true fifth column exists and, more serious, that a deep disaffection has touched many Americans of European birth. We have to watch the dangerous ones; the others have to be re-absorbed into our common society—and we can best take them in by the honesty and the friendliness of our relation with their fellowmen abroad. We have to tell the Italians here what we are saying to the Umbrian peasant and the factory worker in Milan and the clerk in a Roman bank whose movements are watched by a German soldier; the Germans, too. And what we say has to be confident and clear and consistent. For months the quarrel about short wave has continued and Americans returning from Europe have wept at the frivolity and changeableness and lack of imagination in our communications to men who risk their lives to hear what we have to say; it was incredible to them that this vital arm of our attack on Hitler should have been left so long unused, that anyone who could pay could say something to someone in Europe, within the limits of safety, to be sure, but not within the limits of a coordinated policy. One could



advise the Swedes to declare war or assure them that we understood why they did not; one could do almost as much for France.

Short wave to Europe is a mystery to the average citizen; he does not pick it up, and would be only mildly interested if he did. In his mind, that sort of propaganda should be left to the experts; as it is in other lands. But in our case, there are re-echoes at home. Not a "government in exile" speaks from America, but we have here part of many nations, emigrated and transformed, but still with understanding of all that was left behind. We have to think of the Norwegians in Minnesota when we speak to the Norwegians in the Lofotens; the Germans in Yorkville and the Poles in Pittsburgh should know what we say to Berlin and to Warsaw. Our words have to help win the war, and to begin the reconciliation of Europe without which we are not safe. That reconciliation we have turned into a positive thing, a cooperative life which has made us strong; we have to tell Europe what we have done, how Europe has lived in us. We may have to promise and to threaten, too; but mostly we will want to destroy the myth of America-Against-Europe by showing the reality of Europe-in-America; we will want to destroy the lie of an Anglo-Saxon America by letting all the voices be heard of an American America; we will want to destroy the rumor of a disunited America by uniting all the voices in one declaration of ultimate freedom—for Europe and for ourselves.

Europe will ask, if it can reach us, what freedom will mean, how we will organize it, how far we mean to go. If we want to answer honestly, we will have to take stock quickly of what we have—and can offer.

## CHAPTER IX

### Definition of America

WE HAVE TWO PRODIGIOUS VICTORIES TO GAIN—the war and the world after the war. The chatter about not “defining war aims” because specific aims are bound to disturb us, is dangerously beside the point, because the kind of world we will create depends largely on the kind of war we wage. If we nazify ourselves to win, we will win a nazified world; if we communize ourselves, we will probably share a modified Marxian world with the Soviets; and if we win by intensification of our democracy, we will create the only kind of world in which we can live. And, as noted in discussing the strategy of the war, the chances are that we can only win if we divine the essential nature of our people and create a corresponding strategy.

In addition to the direct military need for knowing what kind of people we are, there is the propaganda need, so that we can create a national unity and put aside the constant irritation of partisanship, the fear of “incidents”, the wastage of emotional energy in quarrels among ourselves. And there is a third reason for an exact and candid review of what we are: it is our future.

When this war ends we will make, in one form or another, solemn agreements with the nations of the world, our allies and what is left of our enemies. We know almost nothing about any of them—we, the American people. Our State Department knows little enough; what it knows, it has not communicated to us; and we have never been interested enough to make discoveries of our own. We are about to commit a huge international polygamy, with forty picture brides, each one in a different national costume.

Some conditions of this mass marriage are the subject of

the next section of this book. Here I am concerned with the one thing we can do to make the preliminary steps intelligent. We cannot learn all we need to know about all the other nations of the world; but we can reflect on some things within ourselves, we can know ourselves better; and on this knowledge we can erect the framework into which the other nations will fit; or out of which they will remain if they choose not to fit. We can, by knowing a few vital things about ourselves, learn a lot about South America and Europe and Asia and Australia; what *we* are will determine whom we will marry, whom reject, and whom we will set up, if agreeable, in an unsanctified situation. The laws of man, in many states, require certificates of eligibility to marry, the services of the church inquire if an obstacle exists. Before we enter into compacts full of tragic and noble possibilities, we might also make inquiries. Something in us shies away from the pomp of the old diplomacy—what is that something? We used to like revolutionaries and never understood colonial exploitation—how do these things affect us now? Are we prepared to deal with a government in one country and a people in another? Is it possible for us to ally ourselves to Communists, reformed fascists, variously incomplete democracies, cooperative democratic monarchies, and centralized empires, all at the same time? Is there anything in us which requires us to make terms with Britain about India, with Russia about propaganda, with Sweden about exports, before we make a new world with all of them? Can we, honorably, enter any agreement, with any state or with all states, while they are ignorant of our character—as ignorant, possibly, as we are of theirs?

The difficulty we are in is nicely doubled, because introspection is no happy habit and we say that we *know* all about America, or we say that America cannot be known—it is too big, too varied, too complicated. And these two opposite statements are in themselves a beginning of a definition. America, by this testimony, is a country, large, varied, com-

plex, inhabited by people who either understand their country perfectly or will not make an effort to understand it. I would not care to rest on this definition—but it shows the need of definition.

*Mathematics of Character*

By "definition of America" I mean neither epigrams nor statistics; we are defined by everything which separates and distinguishes us from others. We are, for instance, the only country lying between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and  $25^{\circ} 35'$  and  $49^{\circ}$  north latitude. This definition is exact and complete; it is neither a boast nor a criticism; it establishes no superiority or inferiority; it is a fact, the consequences of which are tremendously significant (our varied climate, our resources, our bigness with *its* consequences in the temper of the people, all go back to this mathematical *fact*.)

Not all the distinguishing marks of our country can be expressed in mathematical terms; if they could be, we would avoid the danger of jingo pride, the logical error of making every difference into a superiority. Moreover, if we had mathematics, we should be able to put on one side what we have in common with other countries, on the other what is exclusively ours—and make a comparison, a guide to international conduct "on scientific principles". We would know how far our likeness joined us to others, so that we could lay a firm basis for action; and how far our differences required compromises or made compromise impossible.

We lack mathematics; our physical boundaries are fixed, but our social boundaries are fluid, our national "genius" escapes definition. Yet we can describe these imponderables even if we cannot force them into a diagram, and their vital significance is as great as any statistics can be. It is a fact that millions of people came to America in the hope of a better life—the number who came can be written down, the intensity of hope can be guessed; and only a compassionate imagination can say what this country gained by the hopes fulfilled

or lost by those which ended in despair. Yet the elation and the disillusion of men and women are both reflected in our laws and customs; and so far as they did not occur in other lands, they are factors in defining the great complex of our national character.

We are defined by events—immigration was an event. But immigrants came to other countries as well, to Canada and Brazil and England. When they came and in what numbers becomes the defining mark for us. It is self-evident that we are different from all other nations both absolutely and relatively; no other nation lies within our boundaries or has all our habits, because none has had our history—that is the base of absolute difference; all other nations share something with us, but we differ from each relatively—in some degree. This would not be worth mentioning if chauvinism did not insist that we differed (and were superior) in all things, while a base cosmopolitanism insisted that we were alike in all things and should be made more so. The corrective for each of these errors is to see what we are.

### *The Revolution in Property*

When this country was settled the ownership of land was the most important economic factor in the lives of all Western peoples. The ruling class in Europe was a "landed aristocracy"; the poor had become poorer because they had usually been gradually driven off the land (as in England) or forced to pay outrageous rents (as in France). In the thirteen original colonies alone we had almost as many square miles of land as France and England together and this seemingly immeasurable area was only the fringe, the shore line, of Continental America; the Mississippi Valley had been explored, and the Southwest, so that the French and Spanish people shared, to an extent, in the hopes which unlimited land offered to the dispossessed.

Before the Declaration of Independence had been uttered, a revolution in the deepest instincts of man had taken place—

land became a commodity of less permanence than a man's musket or horse. In Europe, land was to be built upon (literally and symbolically; ducal or royal Houses were founded on land); land was *real* estate, everything else was by comparison trifling; land was guarded by laws, property laws, laws of inheritance, laws of trespass, laws governing rents and foreclosures; far above laws governing human life was the law governing property, and the greatest property was land; title to property often carried with it what we call "a title" today; count and marquis, their names signify "counties" and "marches" of land; and the Prince (or *Princeps*) was often the first man in the land because he was the first owner of the land. Land was the one universal permanent thing; upon it men were born; over it they slaved or rode in grandeur; in it they were buried.

The American pioneer began to abandon his land, his farm in the clearing of the wilderness, before 1776. He moved away, westward, and complained against King George's legal fence around the land beyond the Alleghenies. The European transplanted to America often founded a House, notably in the aristocratic tradition of the Virginia tidewater; but most of the colonists lacked money or inclination to buy land in quantities; they went inland and took what they needed (often legally, often by squatters' right—which is the right of work, not of law); and then, for a number of reasons, they left the land and went further into the wilderness and made another clearing.

There is something magnificent and mysterious about this mania to move which overtook men when they came to America. Perhaps the primal instinct of man, to wander with his arrow or with his flock, reasserted itself after generations of the hemmed-in life of European cities; perhaps it was some uneasiness, some insecurity in themselves—or some spirit of adventure which could not be satisfied so long as a river or a forest or a plain lay unexplored. Romance has beglamored the pioneer and he has been called rude names for his "rape

of a continent". I have once before quoted Lewis Mumford's positively Puritan rage at the pioneer who did not heed Wordsworth's advice to seek Nature "in a wise passiveness"—advice based on the poet's love for the English Lake district, about as uncivilized then as Northern Vermont is today. The raging pioneer, says Mumford, "raped his new mistress in a blind fury of obstreperous passion". Our more familiar figure of the pioneer in a coonskin cap, leading the way for wife and children, is the romantic counterpart of this grim raper who wasn't aware of the fact that Rousseau and Wordsworth didn't like what he was doing.

He was doing more to undermine the old order than Rousseau ever did. The moment land ceased to be universally the foundation of wealth and position, the way was open for wealth based on the machine—which is wealth made by hand, not inherited, wealth made by the *industry* of one man or group of men; it was wealth made by things in motion, not by land which stands still. The whole concept of aristocracy began to alter—for the worse. If wealth could be made, then wealth became a criterion; presently the money-lender (on a large scale) became respectable; presently money itself became respectable. It was divorced from land, from power, and from responsibility; a few generations later the new money bought up land to be respectable—but not responsible.

### *The Consequences of Free Land*

This was the revolution in which America led the way and it had astounding consequences. The American pioneer did not care for the land—in two senses, for he neither loved it nor took care of it. The European peasant had to nourish the soil before it would, in turn, nourish him and his family; the American did not; he exhausted the soil and left it, as a man unchivalrously leaves an aging wife for a younger; there was so much land available that only an obstinate unadventurous man would not try a hazard of new fortunes. This

may be morally reprehensible, but politically it had a satisfactory result: the American farmer exhausted the soil, but did not let the soil exhaust him; so that we established the tradition of waste, but escaped the worse tradition of a stingy, frightened, miserly, peasant class. The more aesthetic American critics of America never quite forgave us for not having peasant arts and crafts, the peasant virtues, the peasant sturdiness and all the rest of the good qualities which go with slavery to the soil.

So the physical definition of America leads to these opening social definitions:

we first destroyed the land-basis of wealth, position and power;  
we were the first nation to exhaust and abandon the soil;  
we were supremely the great wasters of the world;  
we were the first great nation to exist without a peasant class.

From this beginning we can go on to other effects:

our myths grew out of conquest of the land, not out of war against neighboring states;  
we created no special rights for the eldest son (as the younger could find more and better land);  
the national center of gravity was constantly changing as population moved to take up new land;  
we remained relatively unsophisticated because we were constantly opening new frontiers;  
our society, for the same reason, was relatively unstable;  
we lived at half a dozen social levels (of comfort and education, for instance) at the same time;  
we created a "various" nation, and when the conditions of owning and working land changed, we were plunged into a new kind of political revolution, known then as the Populist movement.



The effects of a century of fairly free land are still the dominant psychological factor in America; the obvious effects are that the land invited the immigrant and rewarded the pioneer—who between them created the forms of society and established half a dozen norms of character. In addition, the opportunities offered kept us ambitious at home and peaceful abroad. Once we felt secure within our territorial limits, we became basically pacifist, and it took the “atrocities” of the Spaniards in Cuba to bring us into our first war against a European nation since 1814. This pacifism was more intense in the more agricultural states and was fed by the settlement there of pacific Scandinavians whose country’s record of avoiding wars was better than ours. Pacifism was constantly fed by other immigrants, from Germany and Russia and minor states, who fled from compulsory military service (for their children, if not for themselves). In revenge for this un-European pacifism we created a purely American lawlessness—and a toleration of it which is the amazement of Nazi Germany, where the leaders prefer the sanctions of law for their murders; civilized Europe, having lived through duels and massacres, is still shocked by our constant disregard of law, which began with the absence of law in pioneering days, and was met, later, by our failure to educate new citizens to obedience or adapt our laws to their customs.

### *America on the Move*

One more thing, directly, the land did: it made us a mobile people and all the changes of three hundred years (since the first settlers struck inland from Plymouth and upland from Jamestown) have not altered us. The voyage which brought us here often lost momentum for a generation; but the pioneer in the Conestoga wagon was moving into the Northwest Territory as soon as the Revolution was over; then New England began to move to the west; the covered wagon followed trails broken by outriders to the western ocean; the Gold Rush pulled men through the wintry passes or around

the Horn, and by then our passion for moving swiftly over great distances had given us the Clipper ship; after the Civil War the Homestead Act started a new move to the West, and the railroads began to make movement less romantic, but regular and abundant. If the 1870's were not marked by great migrations of men, they were scored into the earth by the tremendous drives of cattle, north from Texas in the summer, south from Wyoming as winter threatened, hundreds of thousands of them, herded across state lines and prairies and riverbeds, back and forth, until the last drive to the railheads at Abilene or Kansas City. We were moving a bit more slowly, chiefly from the country to the cities, but the far northwest was beginning to grow; then, when it seemed that we could move no more, the motor car, which had been a luxury for the few in Europe, developed as a common tool for the average family, and America was mobile again, first with naive pleasure in movement (and a satisfaction in the tool itself), then in an extraordinary outburst of activity which has not been sufficiently studied—the tin can tourist, the first middle-class-on-the-march in history. This search for the sun, with its effects on Florida and California, broke the established habits of the middle-class and of the middle-aged; it wrote a new ending to the life of the prudent, industrious American, it required initiative and if it ended in the rather ugly tourist camp, that was only a new beginning.

The great migration of Negroes to the north followed the first World War; since then the mobility of Americans is the familiar, almost tragic, story of a civilization allowing itself to be tied almost entirely to one industry, and not providing for the security of that one. Every aspect of American life was altered by the quantity-production of motor cars; the method of production itself caused minor mass-movements, small armies of unemployed marching on key cities, small armies marching back; and the universal dependence on trucks, busses and cars, which bankrupted railroads, shifted populations away from cities, slaughtered tens of thousands an-

nually, altered the conditions of crime and pursuit, and, in passing, made the country known to its inhabitants; moreover, the motor car which created only a small number of anti-social millionaires, made some twenty million Americans feel equal to the richest and the poorest man on the road. Mobility which in the pioneer days had created the forms of democracy came back to the new democracy of the filling station and the roadside cabin.

"Everybody" had a car in America, but there was no "peoples' car"; that was left for dictators to promise—without fulfilment. The cars made in America were wasteful; they were artificially aged by "new models" and the sales pressure distracted millions of Americans from a more intelligent allocation of their incomes; these were the errors, widely remarked. That the motor car could be used—was being used—as a civilizing agent, escaped the general attention until the war threatened to put a new car into the old barn, beside the buggy which had rested there for thirty years—but might still be good for transport.

In one field America seemed to lag: aviation. Because the near frontiers of Europe made aircraft essential, all European *governments* subsidized production; the commercial possibilities were not so apparent to Americans; no way existed for doing two things—making planes in mass production, and getting millions of people to use them. The present war has anticipated normal progress in methods of production by a generation; it may start the motor car on a downward path, as the motor car dislodged the trolley and the train; but this will only happen if the aeroplane fits into the basic American pattern of machines for mobility.

*"The Richest Nation on Earth"*

From free land to free air, movement and change have produced a vast amount of wealth in America. Because land could not be the exclusive base of riches, wealth in America began to take on many meanings and, for the first time in

history, a wealthy people began to emerge, instead of a wealthy nation.

We were, in the economist's sense, always a wealthy nation. The overpowering statistics of our share of all the world's commodities are often published because we are not afraid of the envy of the gods; of coal and iron and most of the rarer metals used to make steel, we have an impressive plenty; of food and the materials for shelter and clothing, we can always have enough; from South America, we can get foods we cannot raise but have become accustomed to use; of a few strategic materials in the present war economy, we have nothing; except for these, we are copiously supplied; but we should still be poor if we lacked ability and knack and desire to make the raw materials serviceable to all of us. So that our power to work, our way of inventing a machine, our habit of letting nearly everybody in on the good things of life, is specifically a part of our wealth.

We have a tradition about wealth, too. The Government, to some degree, has always tried to rectify the worst inequalities of fortune; and the people have done their share: they have not long tolerated any artificial bar to enterprise.

*"Rugged Individuals"*

Government's care of the less fortunate struck some twenty million Americans as something new and dangerous in the early days of the Hoover depression, and in the sudden upward spiral of the first New Deal. Perhaps the most hackneyed remark was that "real Americans" would reject Federal aid—a pious hope usually bracketed with remarks about Valley Forge. It was forgotten that the men who froze and swore at Valley Forge demanded direct Government aid the moment the Republic was established; and that the Cumberland Road, the artery from Fredericksburg, Maryland to Uniontown, Pennsylvania, was built by the Government of the United States for its citizens. Government gave bounties and free land; Government gave enormous sums of money

to industry by way of tariff, and gave 200 million acres of land to railroads. There was never a time when the Federal Government was not giving aid, in one form or another, to some of the citizens. The outcry when Government attempted to save *all* the citizens indicated an incomplete knowledge of our history. In particular, the steady reduction of the price of land was a subsidy to the poor, a chance for them to start again. The country, for all its obedience to financial power, never accepted the theory of inevitable poverty. After the era of normalcy, when the New Deal declared that one-third of a nation was ill clothed and ill fed, the other two-thirds were astonished—and not pleased; the fact that two-thirds had escaped poverty—the almost universal condition of man throughout the world—was not enough for America.

It is an evil thing that we have not conquered poverty or the stupidity and greed which cause poverty; but our distinguishing mark in this field is the expectation of success. We are the first large nation reasonably planning to abolish poverty without also abolishing wealth. The Axis countries may precede us; on the lowest level it is possible that Hitler has already succeeded, for like the Administration in 1931, Hitler can say that no one dies of starvation. Our intention has always been a little different; it is to make sure that no one lacks the essentials of life, not too narrowly conceived, and that the opportunity to add to these essentials will remain. This may betray a low liking for riches—but it has its good points also. It has helped to keep us free, which is something.

*"Ye Shall Live in Plenty"*

Wealth—and the prospect of wealth—are positive elements in the American makeup. We differ from large sections of Europe because we take a positive pleasure in working to make money, and because we spend money less daintily, having a tendency to let our women do that for us; this evens things up somewhat, for if men become too engrossed in busi-

ness, women make the balance good by undervaluing business and spending its proceeds on art, or amenity, or foolishness.

The tradition that we could all become millionaires never had much to do with forming the American character, because no one took it too seriously; the serious thing was that Americans all believed they could prosper. Those who did not, suffered a double odium—they were disgraced because they had failed to make good and they had betrayed the American legend. The legend existed because it corresponded to some of the facts of American life; only it persisted long after the facts had been changed by industrialism and the closing of the frontiers and our coming of age as a financial power had changed the facts. We were heading toward normalcy and the last effort to preserve equality of opportunity was choked off when Wilson had to abandon domestic reform to concentrate on the war.

Social security, a possible eighty dollars a month after the age of sixty-five, are poor substitutes for a nation of spend-thrifts; we accept the new prospect grimly, because the general standard of living and the expectation of improvement are still high in most parts of America. In spite of setbacks, the general belief is still, as Herbert Croly said it was in 1919, "that Americans are not destined to renounce, but to enjoy".

Normal as enjoyment seems to us, it is not universal. There have been people happier than ours, no doubt, with a fraction of our material goods; religious people, simple races, people born to hardship, have their special kinds of contentment in life. But with minor variations, most Western people, since the industrial revolution, are trying to get a share of the basic pleasures of life; in a great part of the world it is certain that most people will get very little; in America it is assumed that all will get a great deal.

The struggle for wealth is so ingrained in us that we hate the thought of giving it up; we are submitting reluctantly to rules which are intended to equalize opportunity, if opportunity comes again.

*America Invented Prosperity*

In this new organization of our lives, money becomes purely a device of calculation, since the costs of the war exhaust all we have; we can now look back on America's "money-madness" with some detachment; without balancing the good and evil done to our souls by the effort to become rich, we should estimate how powerful the incentive still is—and then use it, or defeat it, for the best social advantage. For it has its advantages, if we know how to use them, and fear of money is not the beginning of a sound economy. People occasionally talk as if the desire for money is an American invention; actually our invention is the satisfaction of the desire, which we call prosperity.

For prosperity is the truth of which wealth is the legend, prosperity is the substantial fact and wealth the distorted shadow on the wall.

The economics implied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution alike indicate a new intent in the world, to create a prosperous people. The great men who proclaimed liberty in 1776 have often been blamed because they did not create "economic freedom" to run beside their political freedom. Actually they did not create either, leaving it to the separate States to say whether one man with one vote was the true symbol of equality, whether he who paid ten times the average tax should have ten times the voice in spending it. As for economic equality, which is what later critics really want, it would have been inappropriate to the undeveloped resources of the country and impossible in the political climate of the time. The people of the new nation had suffered from centralized government; they would not have tolerated the only practical way of establishing economic controls—a highly concentrated government over a single, not a federated, nation. The men who fought the war of Independence did not even set up an executive, only a committee of thirteen to act while Congress was not in session; they erected no sys-

tem of national courts; and Congress, with the duty of creating an army and navy, could not draft men to either, nor pay them if they volunteered. When this system of Confederation broke down, the Constitution was carefully built up, to prevent Government from regulating the lives of the people; and the people, who were confident that they could make their own way, wanted only to be secure against interference. They did not ask Government to equalize anything but opportunity.

The "rich and well-born" managed to turn the Constitution to their own advantage; their opportunities were greater than the immediate chances of the poor farmer and the city rabble; but government by the men of property was never made permanent, and the most critical historian of the Constitution is the one who says that "in the long reach of time . . . the fair prophecy of the Revolutionary era was surprisingly fulfilled."

The intention, so commonplace to us, was wildly radical in its time; poets and philosophers had imagined a world freed from want (usually also a world peopled by ascetics); the promise of the United States was a reasonable gratification of the desires of all men. That was the reason for giving land to migrants, and citizenship to foreigners, and Statehood to territories. When the French Revolution began to settle down, the people had acquired rights, they had been freed of intolerable taxes, the great estates had been cut up; but the expectation of steadily improving conditions of life did not become a *constant* in the French character; nor did the upheaval in England in 1832 and under the Chartists leave a permanent hope for better things in the mind of the lower classes. The idea of class and the idea of a "station in life", a "lot" with which one must be content, persisted after *all* the Revolutions in Europe in the 19th century. Only in America the Revolution set out to—and did—destroy the principle of natural inevitable poverty. We have not actually destroyed poverty, and this gap between our intent and our achieve-



ment has been publicized. But what we intended to do and what we accomplished and what we still have power to do are more significant than the part we failed to do. We created for the first time in history a nation which did not accept poverty as inevitable.

This had profound effects on ourselves and on the rest of the world. We became restless and infected Europe with our instability. We became optimistic and Europe rather deplored our lack of philosophy. We enjoyed many things and became "materialistic", and Europe sent us preachers of renunciation and the simple life. It became clear that, for good and evil, our character was departing from any European mold, and parts of Europe were tempted to join the Confederacy in 1861 or Spain in 1898 in the hope of destroying us.

### *Our Fifty Years of Class War*

From about 1880 to 1930 we were moving into a new system of government; in the Midwest the children of New England and the children of Scandinavia agreed to call this system plutocracy—the system of great wealth which is based on poverty; it threatened to displace the system of almost equally great wealth which is based on prosperity.

The constant radicalism of America, based on free land, frequent movement, and belief in the future, flared up in the 1880's and for generations this country was engaged in a class war between the rich and the poor (as it had been in Shays' time and in Jackson's). Our political education was won in this time, but Populism died under the combined effects of a war against Spain and a new process of extracting gold; it was revived under Theodore Roosevelt, under Woodrow Wilson, and under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, all of whom tried to shift the base of wealth without cracking the structure itself. Wealth had come into conflict with some other American desires, it had begun to *limit* enterprise and, in its bad spots, was creating a peasantry and a proletariat.

With some feeling that Europe must not repeat itself in America, the people on three occasions chose liberal Presidents and these men built on the "wild" ideas of the 1880's the safeguards of economic democracy which seemed needed at the time.

We are a nation in which the Continental European class system has not become rooted; it is socially negated and politically checked; we are a democracy tempered by the special influence of wealth and, more important, by the special position of working-wealth; (inherited money counts so little that the great inheritors of our time fight their way back into production or politics, with a dosage of liberal principles). According to radicals we are still governed by massed and concentrated finance-capital, and according to certain Congressmen we are living under a labor-dictatorship. Very little perspective is required to see that we are living as we always have lived, our purposes not fully realized, our errors a little too glaring, our capacity to change and improve not yet impaired.

### *Labor Troubles*

The reason we seem to be particularly unsure of ourselves now is that we are creating a national labor policy forty years late. We are hurried and immature; the depression drained our vitality because we were told that change in our institutions meant death to our "way of life"; the traditional American eagerness to abandon whatever he had exhausted, died down; the investment was too great and the interests were too complex. So the changes we had to make all seemed revolutionary if not vengeful, and men whose fathers had lived through the Populist rebellion often seriously felt that the recognition of organized labor was the beginning of class warfare in America.

The forty year lag in the labor situation had evil effects on all concerned: the Government was too often uncertain, and the leaders of labor too often unfit. Like other organized

groups, labor unions did not always consult the public good and criminals were found among them; but organized labor should be compared with organized production or organized banking or medicine or law; all of these have long traditions, all have the active support of the public; yet their ethics are quite as often dubious, they act out of basic self-interest, and the criminals among them, utility magnates stealing from stockholders, doctors splitting fees, manufacturers bribing legislators, are as shocking as the grafters and racketeers of the labor unions.

The temporary dismay over labor's advances and obstinacy will pass, the laws will finally be written; but we will still be a country backward in the *habits* of organized dealing between management and labor. The advantage lies in the past; we did not create a basic hostile relationship because the laborer was always on the point of becoming a foreman or thought he would start his own shop; or a new wave of high wages "settled" strikes without any settled principles—to the dismay of the few statesmen among labor leaders.

Firm relations imply some permanence. The employer expected to retain his business; the worker expected to better it. Consequently, the basic American labor policy is not grounded in despair; it does not represent endless poverty, or cruelty, or a desire to revenge ancient wrongs. Nor does it represent fear. The disgraces of Memorial Day in Chicago and of Gate Four in Detroit will come again if the laws we create do not correspond to the facts; but the habits of Americans have not created two sullen armies, of capital with its bullies, of labor with its demagogues. These exist on the frontiers, where border clashes occur. The main bodies are not hostile armies, but forces capable of coordinated effort. Theodore Roosevelt was prepared to send the troops of the United States to take over the Pennsylvania coal mines, because the mine owners (with "Divine Right" Baer to guide them) refused to deal with the unions under John Mitchell; as soon as that was known, the possibility of creating a labor

policy became bright, because Roosevelt was, in effect, restoring the balance lost when Cleveland sent troops to Pullman. The position of Government as the impartial but decisive third party was sketched, and some forty years later we are beginning to see a labor policy in which the Government protects both parties and provides the machinery for the settlement of all disputes.

Our immaturity and peevishness about an established routine for labor disputes has to be counted on as a factor in our character, chiefly because we shall remain for some time behind the other great industrial countries in the smoothness of operation. In normal times a British contractor did not have to allow for strikes, an American did; and our present war effort, our propaganda, and our plans for the future, all have to take this element into consideration. The false unity of December, 1941, resulted in a serious pledge of "no strikes, no lockouts"; but within three months the National Labor Relations Board was admitting that it needed guidance to create a policy, and worse than sporadic trouble was in the wind. So much the more did we have to know what we were like in labor affairs, and without self-imposture, act accordingly. The war gave an opportunity for statesmen to make a new amalgam of the elements in the labor situation; but the war also made people hysterical about unrealities, and the labor situation was treated in two equally bad ways: as if we could have maximum production without any policy, or as if no policy could be evolved, and we would have to fight the Axis while the Administration destroyed capital and Congress destroyed labor.

### *The Danger of Godlessness*

I am listing certain actualities of American life, with notes on their sources, as a guide to conduct—particularly the conduct of the war (which should be built on our character) and the conduct of civilian propaganda which must, at times, effect temporary alterations in our habits. I have, so far, named

those aspects of our total outlook which come from the size and many-sided wealth of the country, and from our confident, unskilled attempts to deal with wealth and labor and the shifts of power which are bound to occur in a democracy. I come now to items which are no less potent because they are impalpable. Any effort which counts on bringing the whole strength of America into play must count also on these.

We are a profoundly irreligious people. We are highly sectarian and we are a church-going people; but in the sense that religion rises from our relation to a higher power, we are irreligious. We are not constantly aware of any duty: to the state, to our fellowmen, to Mankind, to the Universal Principle, to God. We live unaware even of a connection between ourselves and anything we do not instantly touch or see or hear; we have grown out of asking for help or protection, and disasters fall on us heavily because we are separated from our fellowmen, having no common needs, or faith.

The coming together, in freedom, of many faiths, and the rise of material happiness in the great era of scepticism, left us without a functioning state religion; the emancipation of each individual man from political tyranny and economic degradation left us without any sense of the universal; we have been able to gratify so many private purposes, that we are unaware of any great purpose beyond. As for the mystic's faith, it never makes itself felt, and the name "mystic" itself, far from connoting a deeper insight into the nature of God, is now associated with flummery and hoax.

We are irreligious because we have set out to conquer the physical world and deliver a part of the spoils to every man. In our good intention to create and to distribute wealth, creating democracy in our stride, we approach a new relation to others. We are capable of cooperation; but religious people do not cooperate with God; they seek his will and bow to it. We exalt our own will.

This has to be taken into account, because it makes the creation of a practical unity difficult. If we had felt ourselves

linked through God with one another, it would have been easier to join hands in any job we had to do. I do not know whether any of the western democratic countries had a remnant of this mystical religion; but the appeal to the "blood" and the "race" of both Japan and Germany, the appeal to universal brotherhood in both China and Soviet Russia, indicate what a deep source of strength can be found in man if he can be persuaded to abandon himself. And as this is the fundamental demand of the State in war time, means must be found to compensate for the absence of deep universally shared feeling in America. We shall not find a substitute for religion and we will do well to concentrate on the non-religious actions and emotions which bring men together. Common fears we already have and we may rediscover our common hopes; common pleasures we are enjoying and preparing to sacrifice them for the common good. (Fear and hope and sacrifice and the common good all lie on the periphery of religious feeling; and point toward the center.) But I doubt whether the American people would accept "a great wave of religious feeling" which would be artificially induced to persuade us that all our past was a mistake and that our childish pleasure in good things was as vain as our hope for better.

### *The Alger Factor*

The end result of all the separate elements, the land, the people, the departure from Europe, the struggle for wealth, the fight against wealth, was to make us a people of unbounding optimism, which was our Horatio Alger substitute for religious faith. The cool realistic appraisal of man's fate which an average Frenchman makes, the trust of the Englishman that he will "muddle through", the ancient indifference of the Russian peasant, the resignation of the Orient, are matched in America by an intense and confident appeal to *action*, in the faith that action will bring far better things than have been known. The vulgar side of this is bustle and activity for its own sake and a childish confusion between what is better and

what is merely bigger or newer or more expensive or cheaper ; we have to accept all this because on the other side our faith in action has broken the vise of poverty in which man has been held since the beginning of modern history ; it has destroyed tyranny and set free the bodies and the minds of the hundred millions who have lived in a new world. We have rejected some of the most desirable and beautiful creations of other peoples, the arts of Europe, the Asiatic life of contemplation, the wisdom of philosophers, the exaltation of saints—but we have also rejected the slavery on which these rest or the negation of life to which they tend.

The “materialism” of America is not as terrible as it looks ; and it must be respected by those who want us to make sacrifices. What aristocratic Europeans call gross in us is a hundred million hands reaching for the very things the aristocrats held dear. In the scuffle, some harm is done ; the first pictures reproduced on magazine covers were not equal to the Mona Lisa ; within fifty years the Mona Lisa could be reproduced in a magazine for ten million readers, but the aristocrats still complained of vulgarizing. The first music popularized by records or radio was popular in itself ; within fifty years records and radio will have multiplied the audience for the greatest music, popular or sublime, ten thousand fold ; it is possible that on one Saturday or Sunday afternoon music, good even by pedantic standards, is heard by more people than used to hear it in an entire year. And both of these instances have another special point of interest : each is creating new works on its own terms, so that pictures, very good ones, are painted for multiple reproduction and music, as good as any other, is specially composed for radio.

I shall return to the special field of creative work presently. On a “lower” level, note that some (not all) Europeans and all American expatriates condemn our preoccupation with plumbing. We multiply by twenty million the number of individuals who can take baths agreeably, without servants

hauling inadequate buckets of hot water up three flights of stairs; and are materialistic; but the aristocrat who goes to an hotel with "modern comfort" is spiritual because he doesn't think constantly of plumbing. The truth is that the few can buy themselves out of worry, letting their servants "live for them"; and it is equally true that the only way, short of saint-hood, to forget about the material comforts of life is to have them always at hand.

### *The Morals of Plenty*

We have never formulated the morals of prosperity, nor understood that nearly all the practical morality we know (apart from religion) is based on scarcity; it is intended to make man content with less than his share, it even carries into the field of action and praises those who do not try too hard to gain wealth. This was not good morality for a pioneering country, so Poor Richard preached the gospel of industry and thrift, which is not the gospel of resignation to fate. (Industry clears the wilderness, thrift finances the growth of a nation; Franklin was economically right for his time; in 1920 we were preaching leisure and installment buying, the exact opposite; but we never accepted the reverse morality of working for low wages and living on less than we needed.) The morals of plenty, by which we are usually guided, have created in our minds a few fixed ideas about what is good: it is good to work and to get good wages, so as to have money beyond our instant needs; it is bad to be ill and to be inefficient and to disrupt production by demanding high wages. (Like most moralities, this one has several faces; like most American products it adapts itself to a variety of needs.) In a broader field our morality denies that anything is too good for the average man (if it can be made by mass production). Mass production put an end to the old complaint that the poor would only put coal into the bathtub—mass production of tubs and central heating in apartments. The mo-



rality of scarcity reserves all that is good for the few, who must therefore be considered "the best", the "elite" (which means, in effect, the chosen), the "civilized minority". Democracy began by declaring men born equal and proceeded in a hundred and seventy years to create equality because it needed every man as a customer. Incomplete this was, perhaps only two-thirds of the way; it was nonetheless the practical application of the Declaration, by way of the system of mass production; it was a working morality.

*Merchant Prince to 5-and-Dime*

We came a long way from nabob-morality, based on a splendor of spending; money is not our criterion of excellence, but the reverse; cheapness is the democratic equivalent of quality, and the five-and-ten cent store is the typical institution of our immediate time. We may deplore the vanishing craftsman and long for the time when the American will make clay pots and plaited hats as skillfully as the Guatemalan; but our immediate job is to understand that the process which killed the individual craftsman is also the process that substituted the *goods* of the many for the good of the few.

The five-and-ten had its parallels in Europe before the war, but it remains a distinguishing mark of America, and whoever wants to enlist us or persuade us has to touch that side of our life. It is as near to a universal as we possess; I have known people who have never listened to the radio (until 1939) and never went to the movies, but I have never known anyone who did not with great pleasure go to the five-and-ten. It is a combination of good value and attractive presentation; it is shrewdly managed and pleasantly staffed. One finds cheap substitutes, but one also finds new commodities made for the five-and-ten trade. The chain five-and-ten is, moreover, big business.

In all these things the five-and-ten is a great American phenomenon; characteristic of the twentieth century as the

crossroads general store was of the nineteenth. The hominess of the country store is gone and is a loss; but the gain in other directions is impressive. It is impressive, too, that a store should be so typical of American methods and enterprise and satisfactions. Small commerce is not universally held in esteem. When one remembers the fussiness of the average French bazaar and the ancient prejudice against trade in England, the five-and-ten as a key to our intentions becomes even more effective.

### *Prosperity and Politics*

Our persistent intention is to make good the Declaration of Independence; often minor purposes get in the way, or we are in conflict with ourselves. We attempted equal opportunity (with free land) and at the same time contract labor in the mines; we fought to emancipate the Negro and we created an abominable factory system in the same decades; at times we slackened our check on abuses, because in spite of them we flourished; all too often we let the job of watching over our liberties fall into the hands of newcomers; sometimes we were so engrossed in the fact, the necessary work, that we forgot what the work was for; a ruling group forgot, or a political party, or a generation—but America did not forget. Each time we forgot, it seemed that the lapse was longer and it took more tragic means to recall us to the straight line of our purpose; but each time we proved that we could bear neglect and forgetfulness and would come back to create a free America. There was reason always for the years when we marked time; our prosperity increased so that the redistribution of wealth was harder to do, but was more worth doing; and even the black backward era of normalcy served us with proof that America could create the materials for a high standard of life, although we could not put them into the proper hands. We justified supremely Stalin's compliment to capitalism: "it made Society wealthy"; and we did

it so handsomely as to leave questionable his further statement that Socialism will displace capitalism "because it can furnish Society with more products and make Society wealthier than the capitalist system can."

We planned and eventually produced the machinery for making our lives comfortable; our industrial methods interacted with our land and immigration policy, from the day Eli Whitney put the quantity system into action; and all of them required the same thing—equality of political rights, indifference to social status, a high level of education, the maximum of civil freedom. Our factories wanted free speech for us as certainly as our philosophers did; a free people, aware of novelties, critical of the present, anticipating the future, capable of earning and not afraid to spend—these are the customers required by mass production. And the same freedom, the same intention to be sceptical of authority, the same eagerness to risk all in the future, are the marks of a free man. Our economic system with all its iniquities and stupid faults, worked around in the end to liberate men from poverty and to uphold them in their freedom. The fact that individual producers were afraid of Debs in 1890 and whimpered for Mussolini in 1931 is a pleasing irony; for these reactionaries in politics were often radicals in production; they had contributed to our freedom by their labors and our freedom was the condition of their prosperity. Only free people fulfill their wants, and it is not merely a coincidence that the freest of all peoples should be also the freest spenders.

The consequences of the Declaration are now beginning to be understood. The way we took the land and left it, or held it until it failed us; the way we brought men of all nations here and let them move, as we moved, over the face of a continent; our absorption in our own capacities and our persistent endeavor to create national well-being for every man; our parallel indifference to our fellowmen, our State, and our God; our wealth and our endless optimism and our fulfilment

of Democracy by technology are some of the basic elements in our lives. Whoever neglects them, and their meaning, in practical life, will not ever have us wholeheartedly on his side; whoever starts with these, among other, clues to discover what America is, will at least be on the right way. All we have to do in the war will rise out of all we have done in our whole history; our past is in the air we breathe, it runs in our veins, it is what we are.

## CHAPTER X

### Popularity and Politics

THERE ARE SOME CONSEQUENCES of our history so conspicuous and so significant that they deserve to be separated from the rest and examined briefly by themselves.

In the United States every week 34 million families listen on an average four hours a day to the radio; 90 million individual movie admissions are bought; 16 million men and women go bowling at least once, probably oftener; thousands of couples dance in roadhouses, juke-joints, and dance halls; in winter 12 million hunting licenses are issued; millions of copies of the leading illustrated magazines are sold; and, in normal times, some ten or fifteen million families take their cars and go driving.

These are not mass enterprises; they are popular enterprises; there are others: mass-attendance at sport, or smaller, but steady, attendance at conventions, lodge meetings and lectures. For the most part, all these can be divided into sport, games, fun; the search for information in entertainment; and entertainment by mass-communication.

Sport is pleasant to think about; after all the scoldings we have had because we like to watch athletic events (just as the ancient Greeks did), it is gratifying to report the great number of people who are actually making their own fun. The same ignoble but useful desire for money which has so often served us has now built bowling alleys, dance halls and tennis courts, so that we are doing more sports ourselves. Sport began to come into its own after Populism and Theodore Roosevelt's Square Deal; it is therefore not anti-social and even withstood the prosperity of Harding and Coolidge.

*Means of Communication*

The other elements I have mentioned, movies, radio and a new journalism, are the products of our immediate time. Although the moving picture was exhibited earlier, it began to be vastly popular just before the first World War, and was promptly recognized as a prime instrument of propaganda by Lenin as he began to build the Socialist State in 1917; the moving picture may have been colossal then, but it did not become prodigious, a social engine of incalculable force, until the problems of speech had been mastered.

By that time another pre-war invention, the radio, had established itself in its present commercial base. Radio was first conceived as an instrument of secret communication; it began to be useful, as wireless telegraphy, when the Soviets used it to appeal to peoples over the heads of their governments—although this appeal still had to be printed, the radio receiver did not exist. When the necessary inventions were working (and the tinkering American forced the issue by building his own receivers and his own ham-senders), radio began to serve the public. Among its earliest transmissions were a sermon, the election results in the Harding-Cox campaign, crop reports, and music. The entrance of commerce was easy and natural; and before the crash of 1929 the decisive step was taken: the stations went out of the business of creating programs and sold "time", allowing the buyer to fill it with music or comedy or anything not offensive to the morals of the community.

By the time commercial radio made its first spectacular successes, in the early days of Vallee and Amos and Andy, a new form of publication had established itself, a fresh combination of text and picture, devoted to fact and deriving more entertainment from fact than the old straight fiction magazine had offered.

These three new means of mass communication are revolu-

tionary inventions of democracy. To use them is the first obligation of statesmanship. They have been seized by dictators; literally, for the first move of a *coup d'état* is to take over the radio and the next is to divert the movies into propaganda.

Before these instruments can be used, their nature has to be understood and their meaning to the average man has to be calculated.

### *Words and Pictures*

Of the fact and picture publications *Life* and *Look* are the best examples; *Time* and *News-Week* are fact and illustration magazines which is basically different, although their success is also important. The appetite for fact appears in a nation supposed to be adolescent and given over to the silliest of romantic fictions; *Time* and the *Readers' Digest* become the great magazine phenomena of our time, growing in seriousness as they understand better the temper of their readers, learning to present fact forcefully, directing themselves to maturity, and helping to create mature minds. Their faults are private trifles, their basic editorial policies are public services.

The word and picture magazine is not yet completely realized; both its chief examples grow and develop, but the full integration of word and image is yet to come. It is probably the most significant development in communication since the depression struck; it promises to rescue the printed page from the obscurity into which radio, the movies, and conservatism in format were pushing books and magazines and newspapers. It is odd that book publication, the oldest use of quantity production, should have so long been content with relatively small circulations. Changes now are apparent. The most interesting developments in recent years are mail-order selling (the basis of the book clubs) and mass selling over the counter, the method of the Pocketbook series. Both withdraw book-sales from the stuffiness of old methods and the artiness

of book "shoppes" which always got in the way of good book-sellers.

The text-and-image publication need not be a magazine; the method is especially applicable to argument, to the pamphlet and the report. The art of visualization has progressed in the making of charts and isotypes and in the pure intellectual grasp of the function of the visual. The economic and technical problems of the use of color have been solved and all the effectiveness of images has been multiplied by the contrast and clarity which color provides. A new language is in process of being formed.

Until television-in-color, which exists, becomes common, the need for this new language is great. For neither the movies nor radio can be used for reasoned persuasion; their attack is too immediate, the listener-spectator does not have time for argument and contemplation. Radio profits positively by its limitation to sound when it works with the right materials; but when President Roosevelt asked his audience to have a map at hand, television supplied the map and the meaning of the map without diverting attention from the speech, which radio could not do. The movies, great pioneer in text and sound, have mastered none of the arts of demonstration or persuasion; they have the immediate gain of a single method and a single objective: appeal to the emotions by absorption in the visual; and the fact that the moving picture's appeal is to a group, means that every element must be over-simplified and every effect is over-multiplied by the group presence. By this the movies also gain when they use the right materials.

The use of the new combination of text and image, growing out of the tabloid and the picture magazine, is, in effect, the creation of a mobile reserve of propaganda. When the radio and the movies have established the facts and aroused the desired emotion, the final battery of argument comes in picture and print; and this, ideally, is carried to the ward



meeting, to the after-supper visit, the drugstore soda counter and the lunch hour at the factory—where the action is determined by men and women in private discussion.

*Universal Languages*

Radio, which instantly creates the desired situation, and movies, which so plausibly arouse the desired emotion, are the two great mass inventions of America. The patents may have been taken out elsewhere, but it was in America that these two forms of mass communication were instantly placed at the service of all people. The errors of judgment have been gross, but the error of purpose was not made; the movies were kept out of the hands of the aesthete and radio was kept out of the hands of the bureaucrat. For a generation we deplored the vulgarity of movies made for morons' money at the box office, and discovered that the only other effective movies were made by dictators, to falsify history, as the Russians did when the miserable Trotsky was cinematically liquidated, or to stir hate as did every film made by Hitler. For a generation we wept over the commercialism of radio and at the end found that commercial radio had created an audience for statesmen and philosophers; and again the alternative was the hammering of dictators' propaganda, to which one listened under compulsion.

The intermediate occasions, the exceptions, are not significant. Some great inventions in the realm of ideas were made by British radio (which is government owned, but not government operated); some exceptional and important films were made for the few. But the dictators and the businessmen both had the right idea—movies and the radio are for all men; they can be used to entertain, to arouse, to soothe, to persuade; but they must not ever be used without thinking of *all* the people. This universality lies in the nature of the instruments, in the endless duplication of the films, the unlimited reception of the broadcasts; and only Hitler and Stalin and the sponsors have been happy to understand this.

Like all those who are habituated to the movies, I have suffered much from Hollywood, my pain being all the greater because I am so devoted; like all those who work in radio, I am acutely conscious of its faults; but the faults and the banalities are not in question now. Now we have to take instruments perfected by others, and use them for our purposes. We have to discover what the ignoramus in Hollywood and the businessman in the sponsor's booth have paid for.

The one thing we cannot do is risk the value of the medium. We have to learn how to use popularity; we have to learn why the movies never could carry advertising, and adjust our propaganda accordingly; and why radio can not quickly teach, but can create a receptive situation; and why we may have to use rhetoric instead of demonstrations to accomplish an end. Moreover, we have to study the field so that we know when *not* to use these instruments, what we must not take from them, in order to preserve their incomparable appeal.

A coordinated use of *all* the means of persuasion is required; to let the movie makers make movies is good, but the exact function of the movies in the complete effort has to be established, or we will waste time and do badly on the screen what can be done well only in print or most effectively on the air. There are many things to be done; we need excitement and prophecy and cold reason, and they must not come haphazard, but in an order of combined effect; we need news and history and fable and diversion, and each must minister to the other. If we fail to use the instruments correctly they can destroy us; one ill-timed, but brilliantly made, documentary on production rendered futile whole weeks of facts about a lagging program; and one ill-advised news reel shot can undo a dozen radio hours. When the means of communication and entertainment become engines of victory, we have to use each medium only at its highest effectiveness; and we have to use all of them together.

The movies, the radio, the popular publication are so new, they seem to rise on the international horizon of the 1920's,

to have no link with our past, to be the same with us as they are all over the world. With these, it is true, we return to the universals of human expression and communication. But what we have done with them is unique, and their significance as part of our war machinery is based on both the universal and the special qualities they possess. That is why I have treated them separately; because they are powerful and have enormous inertia, the slightest error may accumulate tremendous consequences, and the instinctively right use of them will be the most complete protection against disaster at home.

We have to study the right use because these tools have never yet been completely used for the purposes of democracy; and with them we have to remind the American people of other tools and instruments they have neglected, so many that it sometimes seems a passion with us to invent the best instruments and to hand them over to our enemies to use against us.

## CHAPTER XI

### The Tools of Democracy

THE TOOLS OF DEMOCRACY are certain civil actions, certain inventions, certain habits. They can be used against us—but only if we fail to use them ourselves.

The greatest tools are civil liberties which we have been considering as “rights” or “privileges”. The right to free speech is a great one; free speech probably was originally intended to protect property; it preserves liberty; the rights of assembly, of protest for redress, of a free press all have this double value, that they guarantee the integrity of the private man and protect the State.

The great debate on the war brought back some long forgotten phenomena: broadsides, street meetings, marches, and brawls. Before they began, virtually *all* the civil rights were being used either by newcomers to America or by enemies of the American system. The poor had no access to the radio; they used a soap box instead and genteel people shrank away; the Bundist and the American Communist assembled and protested and published and spoke; the believers in America waited for an election to roll around again, and then did nothing about it. The enemies of the people sent a hundred thousand telegrams to Congressmen, signing the names of dead men to kill the regulation of utilities, but the believer in the democratic process didn't remember the name of his Congressman. Bewildered aliens got their second papers and were inducted into political clubs; the old line Americans never found out how the primaries worked.

#### *Public Addresses*

A dangerous condition rose. No families from Beacon Street spoke in Boston Common; therefore, whoever spoke on

the Common was an enemy of Beacon Street; all over America the well-born (and the well-heeled) retired from direct communication with the people, and all over America the privilege of talking to the citizens fell into the hands of radicals, lunatics, and dangerous enemies of the Republic—so that in time the very fact that one tried to exercise the right of free speech became suspect; and Beacon Street and Park Avenue could think of no way to protect themselves from Boston Common and Union Square—except to abolish free speech entirely. They did not dare to say it, but the remarkable Frank Hague, Mayor of Jersey City, said it for them: “Whenever I hear anyone talk about civil liberties, I know he’s not a good American”.

The dreadful humiliation was that it came so close to the truth. The Red and the Bundist, clamoring or conspiring against America, were almost the only ones doing what all Americans had the right to do. We hated cranks, we did not want to be so conspicuous, we hadn’t the time, the police would attend to it, if they didn’t like it here let them go back . . . we allowed our most precious rights to atrophy. When suddenly they were remembered, as they were by the bonus marchers of 1932, we yelled revolution and the President of the United States called out the troops to shoot down the defenders of our country. It was the first time that a petition for redress had been offered by good citizens, by veterans, by men of notable American stock—and it frightened us because they were doing what “only foreigners” or “dangerous agitators” used to do; they were in fact being Americans in action.

What is not used, dies. The habit of protecting our freedom was dying in the United States. There was no conspiracy of power against us; there was no need. We were carrying experimental democracy forward so far on several planes—the material and social planes particularly—that we let it go by default on the vital plane of practical politics. We did not go into politics, we did not electioneer, we did not threaten ward

bosses or county chairmen, we did not form third parties, we did nothing except vote, if it was a fair day (but not too fair if we meant to play golf). As for private action to defend our liberties, it was unnecessary and vulgar and bothersome.

The depression scared us, but not into free speech; by that time free speech was Red; and the deeper we floundered in the mire of defeatism, the more intimidated we were by shouting Congressmen and super-patriots; it was only after the New Deal pulled us out of our tailspin that we saw the light: we too could have been obscure men speaking at street corners, we did not have to give all the soap boxes to men like Sacco and Vanzetti; we too could have published pamphlets like the dreadful Communists, and held meetings and badgered our Congressmen. Suddenly the people were reincorporated into their government; suddenly the people began to be concerned with government; and the tremendous revitalization of political anger was one of the best symptoms of democratic recovery in our generation.

### *Return to Politics*

The merciless pressure of taxation and then the grip of war have pushed us forward and in a generation we will be again as politically aware as our great-grandfathers were when they had one newspaper a week, and only their determination to rule themselves as a principle of action. Perhaps we shall take the trouble they took; they travelled a day's journey to hear a debate and discussed it for a fortnight; they thought about politics and studied the meaning of events. And they quite naturally did their duties as citizens; they dug their neighbors out of snow-blocked roads, they nominated their candidates, they watched and rebuked their representatives. It was not a political Utopia, but it was a more intelligent use of political power than ours has been. The usual excuse for the breakdown of political action in America is that so many "foreigners" came, to whom the politics of freedom were alien. This may have been true of some of the later ar-

rivals; but the Irish were captivated by, and presently captured, city politics wherever they settled; the Germans were the steadiest of citizens and so were the Scandinavians, their studious earnest belief in our institutions shaming our flippant disregard. The Southern Slavs, the Russian Jews and the Italians were farthest removed from our political habits; but their passion for America was great. It could have been worked into political action, and often was worked into political skulduggery by bosses of a more political bent. Many of these immigrants came after the exhaustion of free lands; many were plunged into slums and sweatshops and steel mills on a twelve hour day; and they emerged on the angry side, as disillusioned with America as some of its most ancient families.

That political action dwindled after the great immigrations is true; but it was not the immigrant who refused to act; it was the old family and the typical American; the grafting politicians and the sidewalk radical both kept politics alive; the real Americans were slowly smothering politics. We shall never quite repay our debt to Tammany Hall and the Communists; between them political machines and saintly radicals managed to keep the instruments of democratic action from rusting. Now we have to take them back and learn how to use them again. Fortunately we have no choice. We neglected our rights because we wanted to sidestep our duties; today the war makes our duties inescapable and we are already beginning to use our rights. For in spite of censorship and regimentation, we will use more of our instruments of democracy than ever; we will because we are fighting for them and they have become valuable to us.

The radio, the movies, and popular print are the three tools by which we can create democratic action. The action itself will be appropriate to our time and our conditions; we will not travel ten miles to hear a debate, so long as the radio lasts; but we will have to form units of self-protection in bombed cities; we may need other associations, to apportion

food, to house the homeless, to support the bereaved. We will have to learn how to live together, to share what was once as private as a motor car, to elect a village constable who may have our lives in his hands a dozen times a day. In the process we will be reverting to old and good democratic habits—in a city block in Atlanta or in a prairie village outside Emporia, or in a chic suburb along Lake Michigan. Something like the town-meeting is taking place in a thousand apartment houses where air-raid precautions and the disposal of waste paper are discussed and mothers who have to work trade time with wives who want to go to the movies; the farmers have, since 1932, been meeting; the suburbanites are discussing trains and creation of bus-routes. We are making the discovery that it is our country and we can decide its destiny. We are not to let others rule us; for in this emergency every man must rule himself; the man who neglects his political duty is as dangerous today as the man who leaves his lights on in a blackout.

In the early months of the war our democratic processes were muscle-bound. We hadn't been doing things together; whenever we had organized, it was against some one else; we didn't fall naturally into a simple cooperative effort. And within two months we were breaking into hostile particles, until, in desperation, we discovered that men can work together. The obstructionist manufacturer and the stubborn labor leader could hold up an entire industry; but two men, one from each side, could set each factory going again. The creation of the labor-management committees of two was the first light in the darkness of our domestic policy.

Still to come was the spontaneous outbreak of fervor and the cold organization for victory. We had forgotten the tools of democracy which we had to work together, as simply as men had to work on a snowbound country road together. In a small town of Ohio a pleasant event occurred which had a stir of promise; Dorothy Thompson's report was:



"They got together in the old-fashioned American way: in the old opera house. They warmed and instilled enthusiasm and resolution into one another, by the mass of their presence, and by music, and prayer.

"Mr. Sweet had put the F.F.A. (The Future Farmers of America and the older brothers of the Four-H clubs) to work, and they had made a survey of the existing resources of the community, in trucks, autos, combines, tractors. And he proposed to them that they use these resources, *as a community*, getting the greatest work out of them with the greatest conservation of them; organizing transportation to the factory where war production was going on, so that no auto travelled for its owner alone, but for as many workers as it could carry."

### *Democratic Action*

There is a field of endeavor in war time where this sort of spontaneous, amateur organization is best; and our Government will be wise if it prevents the inexpert from building bombers but lets them, as far as possible, get children to and from school by local effort. We want to feel that we are being used, that our powers are working for the common good. So far we have been irritated by sudden demands, and frightened by long indifference to our offers—until an angry man has done something, as Mr. Fred Sweet did in Mt. Gilead. A government determined to win this war will create the opportunities for democratic action without waiting for angry men. The combination of maximum control (the single head of production) and maximum dispersion (two men in each factory solving the local problem) is exactly what we understand; to translate civilian emotion into terms of maximum use is the next step.

Already this is happening to us: on one side we are grouping ourselves into smaller units; on the other we are discovering that we are parts of the whole nation. It is a tremendous release of energies for us; we are discovering what

we had hoped—that America is of indescribable significance to us and that we for the first time signify in America—we, not bosses or financiers or critics or cliques or groups or movements—but we ourselves. Something almost dead stirs again and we know that we shall be able to work with our fellow-men, and work with our Government, and watch those we chose to speak for us, and challenge corruption, and see to it that we, who are the people, are not betrayed. We may not revive the *forms* of democracy as they existed in Lincoln's time, but we will never again let the *spirit* of his democracy come so near to being beyond all revival.

We will use the weapons we have and invent new ones; and we had better be prompt. Because we have a victory to win with these weapons and a world to make. We have to work Democracy because we have to create a world in which democracy can live. There is no time to lose.

## CHAPTER XII

### Democratic Control

THE SHAPE OF THIS WAR was created in dark back rooms of cheap saloons, in a lodging house in Geneva, in several prison cells, in small half secret meetings, up back flights of stairs, behind drawn shades, in boarding houses over the dining table, in the lobbies of movie-houses, at lectures attended by the idle and the curious and the hopeless, in the kitchen of a New York restaurant where waiters talked more about the future than about tips; it was molded also in British pubs and by the sullen lives of dole-gatherers; it took a definable shape and could have been re-formed but was not, so that its shape today is the result of the pressure of those who willed to act and the missing pressure of groups which failed to meet and talk and plan.

The earth-shaking events of our time may have been created by the great and mysterious forces of history, but their exact form was fixed by obscure people: the Russian Revolution by Lenin and Trotsky, students, impractical men, and the homeless Stalin; and the war by Hitler, the house painter, the despised little man, the corporal who couldn't get over his military dreams. These were the leaders, the conspicuous ones. They planned—and wrote—and gathered a few even more obscure followers, and talked and lived in utter darkness until the time came for them to fight.

For a thousand years the destiny of mankind will be shaped by what these men did in countries barely emerging into freedom—and we to whom the gods have given all freedom, sit by and hesitate even to talk about the future, folding our hands and piously saying that in any case it will be decided for us. That is the result of forgetting our democratic rights

and duties; with them we have forgotten that the future is ours to make.

It will not be made for us; it will not be made in our favor unless we make it for ourselves; the weapons with which we fight the war will be strong and terrible when we come to create the peace. And we will create it either by using the weapons or by dropping them and running away from our triumph, which is also our responsibility.

We will not escape the responsibility by saying that we cannot control "the great forces", the "wave" of events. We can do what Hitler and Lenin did, when they were starving and fanatic and obscure: we can work and wait and work again. We must not say that we are helpless in the face of international intrigue. We—not Churchill and Roosevelt—wrote the Atlantic Charter, and we can un-write it and write it over again; we the people, not Henry Cabot Lodge, crushed the League of Nations by our indifference; we, not Congressmen bribed by scrap-iron dealers, armed Japan by our greed, and we, all of us, let Hitler go ahead by our ignorance. We have done all these things without working; and the only thing we have not tried, is to put out our hands and take hold of our destiny. In the first dreadful crisis of our war, we saw China begin to plan the world after the war, preparing a democratic center of 800 million people in Asia, putting pressure on Britain to proclaim liberty for India, taking hold of the future with faith and confidence—while we said not one open word to Asia, and had barely spoken to our nearest friends, the oppressed of Europe, to tell them that our purpose was liberty.

We cannot let the shape of the future be molded by other hands. The price of living as we want to live is more than sweat and blood and tears: we have to make the grim effort of thinking and take the risk of making decisions. A painful truth comes home to us: we are no longer the spoiled children of Destiny—our destiny is our action.

*Record of Isolation*

For more than a hundred years the people of the United States did not have to act and avoided the consequences of Democracy in international affairs. Officially we had nothing to do with Europe, except on special occasions when we snapped at Britain, frightened the Barbary pirates, helped Napoleon I, drove Napoleon III out of Mexico. We had no continuing policy and the details of foreign affairs were not submitted to the voter. This was natural enough; the eyes of America turned away from the Atlantic seaboard toward the Mississippi Valley; turned back from the Pacific to Chicago and the east; turned again to Detroit and Birmingham and Kansas City.

We have not yet got the habit of thinking steadily about other nations. Our post-war suspicion of the League, our terror of the USSR, our pious agreements with England and Japan, our weak dislike of Mussolini and Hitler, still left us unconcerned with *policy*. We remained in the diplomatic era of William Jennings Bryan while Europe marched back into the era of Metternich or Talleyrand.

Yet the voters have, since 1893, determined some aspects of our foreign policy. They did not vote on a loan to China, but they did keep in power the party that made war in Spain, bought the Philippines, protected Cuba, and policed Central America. This tentative imperialism was never the supreme issue of a campaign; the Republican Party had always a better one, which was prosperity. In the early twentieth century, the American voter only accepted, he did not directly approve, the beginnings of a new international outlook.

Our tradition is obviously not going to help us here; but there is another—the tradition of democratic control. It has not begun to operate in foreign affairs; before it can operate, we will have to clear our minds of some romantic illusions.

Our future lies balanced between Europe and Asia; the disagreeable certainty, like a chill in our bones now, is that we

cannot escape the world. We still think of participation in world affairs negatively as a favor we may, if we choose, bestow on less favored nations, or as a mere necessity to keep the plagues of war and tyranny quarantined from our shores. The prospect is disagreeable because we, the people, have no experience of international affairs; we have not yet made over diplomacy as we have made over domestic politics. We have begun to send newspapermen into foreign lands and to trust them more than we trust our ambassadors—because the journalists have begun to democratize diplomacy. They have told us more, they have often represented us more completely, and represented international business less; they have been curious, indiscreet, and generally unaffected by the snobbery which used to ruin our ministers to smart European capitals. The correspondents have taken the characteristic American democratic way of altering an ancient European institution, by shrewdly publicised disrespect. Whenever we have had a strong Secretary of State, something further has been done; but the permanent officials of our State Department have completely accepted the European style of international dealings; they have been so aware, and ashamed, of being born on the wrong side of the Atlantic sheets, that all the brash independence of America has been hushed; our leading career diplomats have never been Americanized by the middle west; they came from an almost alien institution, the private school; they represented smart cosmopolitanism disproportionately; they represented the East, banking, leisure, intellectualism; they did not represent America.

On occasions, political chance brought a son of the wild jackass into the State Department, or gave him an embassy; and the pained professionals had to resort to the language of diplomacy for the *gaffes* and *gaucheries* of American diplomacy. These awkward Americans were slipping all over the polished floors of the chancelleries of Europe; but they were not falling into the hands of the European diplomats.

Neither the fumbles of our occasional ignorant envoys nor

the correct discretion of the career men gave us any habit of thinking about other countries. On the west coast there is a tradition of wariness about the Orient—but it rises from immigration, not international relations. We have no habit of hatred as the French had for Germany, no cultivated friendships except for the occasional visit of a prince. We are not susceptible to European flattery if we live beyond the Atlantic seaboard—or below the \$50,000 income level; for crowds, a Hollywood star is at least as magnetic as a Balkan Queen; and it is not conceivable that we should ever treat the coming of a Russian ballet as a part of a political campaign, as the French, quite correctly, did in 1913.

We are now paying for our quiet unfortified borders, for the broad seas so suddenly narrowed. We have to learn about foreign affairs, about our own Empire (we hardly know that we have one). And this is the hardest thing of all: that while we move in ignorance, *we have to re-work all the basic concepts of international affairs*, or they will destroy us. We will have some support in the people of Great Britain, in the governments of Scandinavia, and in the diplomatic habits of the USSR; but for the most part we must make our way alone.

### *Debunking Protocol*

Again, as in the case of military strategy, the average man must study the subject to protect himself. He can no longer risk his life, and the fortunes of his family, in the hands of a few career men in the State Department, working secretly, studying protocol, forgetting the people of the United States.

The amateur statesman is as laughable as the amateur strategist, but the laugh is not always going to be on us. We will popularize diplomacy or it will destroy us. We have first of all to destroy the myth of "high politics". We have to examine Macchiavelli and Talleyrand and Bismarck and Disraeli with as much realism as we examine Benedict Arnold and James J. Hill and Edison and Kruger. We need jour-

nalist-debunkers to do the work, a parallel, by the way, to the process of simplifying military discussion, which is being done by newspaper and radio experts. We have to learn that the great tricks, the great arrangements of power, have been as shady as horse-trades, as ruthless as robbery, and often as magnificent as building a railroad—but in all cases they have represented the desires of certain groups, powerful enough at any given time to impose their wishes on the people. War, business, patriotism, medicine, sociology, religion, and sex have all been re-examined and debunked in the past two generations; but diplomacy which can destroy our satisfaction in all of them, still parades as the perfect stuffed shirt, with a red ribbon across it. At the moment no one can say whether Hitler has blasted the Foreign Office and our State Department; if he has, it is an achievement equal to taking Crete; and we ought to thank him for it.

We should learn that diplomacy has swapped national honor, and betrayed it, and used it cynically for the advantage of a few—as well as protected it. We should examine the assertion of “national destiny” before the era of democracy, to see whether the private wealth of a prince and the starvation of a people actually are predestined, whether the mine-owners of France could have allowed German democracy to live, whether Locarno satisfied national honor less than Munich.

And, above all, we should know that this great “game” of European statesmanship, going on from the Renaissance to our own time, is a colossal and tragic failure. At times it has brought incalculable wealth to a thousand English families, to a few hundred Frenchmen, and power to some others. But it has always ended in the desolation of war—and the suspicion holds that to make war advantageously has been the aim of statesmanship, not to avoid it with honor.

We have to rid ourselves of the intolerable flummery of the diplomats because in the future foreign affairs are going to be connected by a thousand wires to our domestic problems,



and we propose to see who pulls the wires. The old tradition of betraying a President at home while supporting any stupidity abroad will have to be scrapped; and we will be a more formidable nation, in external affairs, if we conduct those affairs in our way, not in the way of our enemies.

*A "Various" Diplomacy*

It will not be enough to destroy the myth of high diplomacy and reduce it to its basic combinations of chicanery and power-pressure, its motives of pride and honor and greed. We have to take the positive step of creating a new diplomacy, based on the needs of America, and those needs have to be consciously understood by the American people. Out of that, we may create a layman's foreign policy executed by professional diplomats; just as we are on the way to create a layman's labor policy, executed by professional statisticians, mediators and agents. We have to recognize diplomacy as a polite war; and, as suggested in connection with actual war, we must not fight in the style or strategy of our enemies. We have always imitated in routine statesmanship; and only in the past twenty years have we begun an American style of diplomacy. The "strategy of variety" may serve us here as on the battlefield; it may not. But the strategy of European diplomacy is their weapon, and their strength; we are always defeated when we attempt it, as Wilson was, as Stimson was over Manchuria. Our only successes have been when we side-stepped diplomacy entirely and talked to people.

The first step toward creating our own, democratic, diplomacy will be to convince the American people that they will not escape the consequences of this war. Many of us believe that we actually escaped the consequences of the first World War by rejecting the League of Nations; a process of re-education is indicated, for background. This education can begin with the future and move backward—for our relation to post-war Europe can be diagrammed almost as accurately as a fever chart. We withdrew from the League for peace

and found ourselves in an alliance for war. It can hardly be called a successful retreat. Actually we were in Europe, up to our financial necks, from the moment the war ended to the day when the collapse of an Austrian bank sent us spiralling to destruction in 1929; we stayed in it, trying to recover the benefits of the Davis and Young plans by the Hoover moratorium. We did everything with Europe except recognize its first weak effort to federalize itself on our model.

Decisive our part in this war will be, but if we withdraw as we did the last time, leaving the nations of Europe to work out their own destiny, we will, as a practical matter, destroy ourselves.

The only other certainty we have is that the prosperity of the United States is better served by peace in the world than by war. This is true of all nations; the only difference for us is that the dislocation may be a trace more severe, and that we have no tradition of huge territorial repayments, or indemnities, by which a nation may recoup the losses of war, while its people starve.

Given that basis, we can observe Europe and Asia after the present war.

### *Phases of the Future*

We ought at once to make a calendar. This war will probably not follow the tradition of the last one; it may not gratify us with an exact moment for an armistice; we may defeat our enemies piecemeal and miss the headlines and tickertape and international broadcasts and cities alight again and all the gaiety and solemn emotion of an end to war. This war breaks patterns and sets new ones, so the first date on our calendar is a doubtful one; but let us say that by a certain day we will have smashed Germany and Japan; Italy would have betrayed them long before.

Our next step is the "peace conference" stage. Again this war may disappoint us; we may have a long armistice and a reorganization of the world's powers, without Versailles and

premiers in secret conferences; perhaps by that time the peoples of Europe and America will have captured their diplomats. Still, let us say that an interim between armistice and world-order will occur.

The phases of the future grow longer as we progress. We will celebrate the armistice for a day; the interim period may well be a year, because in that time we are going to create the organization which will bring us peace for a century—or for ever. This middle period is the critical one; without much warning, we will be in it; the day after we recover from celebrating the armistice, we will have to begin thinking of the future of the world—and at the same time think about demobilization and seeing whether the old car can still go (if we get tires) and sending food to the liberated territories and smacking down capital or labor as the case may be, and planning the next election—by this time we will have forgotten that the desperate crisis in human history has not passed, but has been transformed into the longer crisis of planning and creating a new world—for which there are even fewer good brains than there are for destroying the old one.

We can take cold comfort in this: if we do not work out a form of world-cooperation acceptable to ourselves *and* the other principal nations, we will bring on an event in Europe beside which the rise of Hitler will seem trivial; it will be world revolution, the final act of destruction which Hitler began. And whatever comes out of it, fascist, communist, or chaos, will be no friend to us; twenty years later we can celebrate the anniversary of a new armistice by observing the start of another European war, which will spread more rapidly to Asia and ourselves. Those of us who went through the first World War, and are in good moral status because we have been under shell fire, may be resigned to a third act in the 1960's; but the men who fight this war may be as revolutionary in England and America as they turned out to be last time in Russia or in Germany. They may want assurance, the day after the war ends, that we have been think-

ing about them and the future of the world. They will give us the choice between world organization and world revolution, and no amount of good intentions will help us. We will have to choose and to act; fascism may be destroyed, but an army returning to the turbulence of a disorganized world will not lack leaders; we can have modified Communism or super-fascism, all beautifully Americanized, if we have nothing better, nothing positive to be achieved when the war ends. And by the time it ends we may understand that disorganization at home or abroad will mean starvation and plague and repression and death.

*Seven New Worlds*

Forming now, openly or privately, are groups to put forth a number of different alternatives to revolution and chaos. Some of these are based on political necessity or the desire to punish the Axis; some correspond to the necessities of a single nation, some are more inclusive. They can be summarized so:

- Re-isolating America;
- Collaboration with Fascism;
- Collaboration with Communism;
- Anglo-American domination;
- American imperialism;
- Revival of the League of Nations;
- A federal organization of the world.

To some people in the United States, none of these seems possible, all of them disastrous. If the confusion of propaganda continues, these people will fall back on the principle of isolation; it is a fatal backward step, but it is better than any of the seemingly fatal forward steps; it is in keeping with part of our tradition; and if Europe as always, with Asia now added, goes forward to another war, the centre and core of America will say "we want out", and mean it. But isolating America cannot be an immediate post-war policy; if we plan

to withdraw, we virtually hand over the world to revolution and hand ourselves into moral and financial bankruptcy. Isolation can only be a constant threat to the world, that we will withdraw unless some of our basic terms are met. We have to know our terms, or our threat is meaningless.

There is much to be said for isolation, or autarchy; I pass it over quickly because I am not attempting to criticise each sketch of the post-war world; only to note certain aspects of them all—notably their relation to the America which I have described in earlier pages. The next two programs are also easy to assay: they are at the opposite extreme; they rise from no part of our basic tradition, and collaboration with either fascism or communism would have to come either by revolution after defeat or by long skillful propaganda which would disguise the fact and make us think that we were converting the world to our democracy.

It is, nevertheless, childish to assume that the thing can't happen. Given a good unscrupulous American dictator we could have made peace with the Nazis, and the Japanese, by squeezing Britain out of the Atlantic and Russia out of the Pacific; our gain would have been the whole Western Hemisphere; this would have gratified both the isolationists and the imperialists; it would have preserved peace and the Monroe Doctrine; the only disqualification is that it would destroy freedom throughout the world—which is the purpose of fascism. This was possible; it may become possible again. Unless Britain shows more intellectual strength in the final phases of the war than she did in the earlier ones, the chance to scuttle her will appeal to any anti-European American dictator; liquidate Hitler, make peace with the anti-Hitlerian Nazis, especially the generals, send our appeasers as ambassadors, and in five years we can re-invigorate a defeated Germany and start world-fascism going again.

The alternative is not so remote. It is a distinct and immediate possibility.

*Red America*

A Socialist England after the war is promised, in effect, by everyone except the rulers of the British Empire. Add a free China indebted to Communist armies; add Russia victoriously on the side of democracy; Red successor states will rise in Italy, Germany and the Balkans; and our destiny would be the fourth or fifth international.

If we say these things are fanciful, we convict ourselves of inability to break out of our own mythology. Either collaboration is as likely as complete isolation; neither would shock us if a good American led us into it. Sir Stafford Cripps is certain that the USSR and the USA fight for the same ideals; and collaboration with Hitler's enemies is our standing policy today. So that a "revolution" in Germany would automatically lead us into friendly relations with the revolutionaries; they will be either fascist or communist, quite possibly they will be Hitler's best friends. Actually we may approach either a fascist or a Communist world order by easy steps, our little hand held by proud propagandists guiding us on our way.

*Parva Carta*

The dominant American relation to Europe, now, is expressed in the Atlantic Charter which is not an alliance, not a step toward union, but a statement of principles. However, the Charter has been used as a springboard and been taken as an omen; so it must be examined and its true bearings discovered. It has, for us, two essential points:

One of these is the Anglo-American policing of the world; it is a curt reminder that this war is not waged to end war; that future wars are being taken for granted and preparations to win them will be made. The Charter was, however, a pre-war instrument for us. Presently the necessities of war may force us to go further and declare our intention to prevent war entirely.

The specific economic point in the Atlantic Charter promises "all States, great and small, victor and vanquished . . . access, on equal terms, to the trade and the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity."

This is a mixture of oil and the mercantile philosophy of a hundred years ago. It has a moral value; it knocks on the head all theories of "rights" in colonies; a nation subscribing to the Atlantic Charter and attempting to isolate a source of bauxite or pitchblende, will have to be hypocritical as well as powerful. "Access to", even on equal terms, does not however imply "power to take and use". Lapland may have access to Montana copper, unhindered by our law; and copper may be deemed vital to Lapland's prosperity (by a commission of experts); but Lapland will not get our copper unless we choose to let her have it.

In effect, the maritime nations, England and America, have said that if they can get to a port in the Dutch East Indies, they propose to trade there, for oil or ivory or sea shells; and they have also said, proudly, that Germany can trade there also, after Germany becomes de-nazified.

No realistic attempt to face the necessity of organized production and distribution is even implied in this point. Instead, President Roosevelt was able virtually to write into an international document a statement of his ideals; as Woodrow Wilson wrote his League of Nations into the Fourteen Points.

Mr. Roosevelt's freedoms are specific; people (not "nations") are to be free from want, from fear, from oppression. Freedom from want is the actual new thing in the world; want—need—hard times—poverty—from the beginning of European history these have been the accepted order, the lot of man, the inescapable fate to which he was doomed by being born.

The Charter rose out of our history and out of England's need. Let me outline again the connection with our history. In 1776, the Declaration of Independence showed a way out

of the poverty-labyrinth in the destiny of man; the Declaration declared for prosperity (then synonymous with free land) and offered it to all (citizenship and equal rights to the immigrant, the chance to share in this new belief in prosperity by becoming American). In a century and a half Europe has scoffed and sneered at this (relatively successful) attempt to break through economic damnation—and at the end, as Europe rocks over the edge of destruction, an American offers this still new and imperfect thing as a foundation stone of peace in the world: freedom from want. It has not yet been completely achieved in America; but we know it can be achieved; we have gone far enough on our way to say that it can be achieved in the whole world.

The American standard is far above freedom from want. It is based, in fact, on wanting too many things and getting a fair percentage of them. But President Roosevelt's point does not involve "leveling"; it is not an equal standard of living all over the world (which is the implied necessity of international Communism). The negative freedom from want is not freedom from wanting; it is explicit, as the words are used: it means that men shall have food and shelter and clothes; and medicine against plague; and an opportunity to learn and some leisure to enjoy life; in accordance with the standards of their people.

This is a great deal. It was not too much for the Soviet Republics to promise, and to begin to bring, to Kalmucks and Tartars and Georgians; it is more than we have brought to our own disinherited in the South, in mining towns, in the fruitful valleys of California. Our partial failure is a disgrace, but not a disaster; our success, though incomplete, is important. For we have carried forward in the light of the other great freedom which Communism has had to sacrifice, which is freedom from fear. All the specific freedoms—to think, to utter, to believe, to act, are encompassed in this freedom from fear. Our basic disagreement with Communism is the



same as our attack on nazi-fascism—both are based on illegitimate power (not power delegated or given, not power with the consent of the governed) : hence both live on domination; on their capacity to instil fear. The war will prove how far this fear penetrated in Russia and in Germany, and how much longer it will be the instrument of coercion in either country.

The President's freedoms are a wide promise to the people of the world—a promise made, like Woodrow Wilson's promises, before entering any agreement with any foreign power. Into the Atlantic Charter, Mr. Roosevelt also injected his basic domestic policies and, by some astute horsetrading managed to make them *theoretically* the basis for international agreement. This point promises improved labor standards, economic adjustment, and social security throughout the world.

Improvement, adjustment, security—they are not absolutes; freedom from want is, in effect, security; any reasonable adjustment between owners and workers will be an improvement in most countries. But the principle behind the labor point is as clear as the inspiration of the points on raw materials and freedom: it is that wars are caused by the miseries of peoples; when the people rule, they will prevent wars unless their miseries are acute; if they are not in dire want, if they have a chance to work, if they are free of coercion and threat, they will not make war—nor will they fall under the hand of the tyrant and the demagogue.

In plain practical statesmanship, Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill apologized for Versailles, which denied Germany access to raw materials and prevented improvement in labor standards and drove millions of Europeans into want and fear; and at the same time they acknowledged the connection between high diplomacy and the food and shelter and comforts of the citizen. The eight points reiterate some of the fourteen; they withdraw from others; but the new thing is all American, it is the injection of the rights of the common man into an international document.

But there the Atlantic Charter ends. As an instrument of propaganda and as a basis of making war and peace, it was outlawed by events; it is forgotten.

*What Is Lacking*

The Charter could not carry its own logic beyond a first step: since we were not allied to Britain we could not discuss a world system—all we could say was that aggressors would be disarmed (by ourselves and Great Britain, neither gaining a military or naval predominance) and later we also *might* disarm—when the world seemed safe. This was on the power side; on the economic side, our role was gratifyingly vague.

Out of the Atlantic mists a few certainties rose, like icebergs. We soon saw:

1. That Britain has no method of organizing Europe; its tradition is isolation plus alliances.
2. That Britain has no system of production parallel to the slave system of Germany, by which Europe would restore the ravages of war.
3. That Britain cannot impose its relatively democratic habits and relatively high level of comfort on the Continent.

In effect, after an uprush of enthusiasm following the defeat of Hitler, the democratic countries will face with panic their tragic incapacity to do what the fascists have almost done—unify the nations of Europe.

*Slow Union-Now*

It was not the function of the Charter to outline the new map of Europe. But the map is being worked over and the most effective of the workers are those led by Clarence K. Streit toward Union-now. Long before the Atlantic Charter was issued, Federal Union had proposed free access to raw materials, even for Germans if they destroyed their Nazi leaders; and the entire publicity, remarkably organized, has a

tone of authority which makes it profoundly significant. I do not know that it is a trial balloon of Downing Street or of the White House; but in America a Justice of the Supreme Court and a member of the Cabinet recommend the proposal to the "serious consideration" of the citizens and it has equally notable sponsors in England.

I believe that union with the British Commonwealth of Nations stands in the way of America's actual function after the war; I see it as a sudden reversal of our historic direction, a shock we should not contemplate in war time; it does not correspond to the living actualities of our past or present. But I think we owe the Unionists a great deal; they have incited thought and even action; they serve as the Committee to Aid the Allies did before last December, to supply a rallying point for enthusiasts and enemies; we are doing far too little thinking about our international affairs, and Federal Union makes us think.

It has two aims: the instant purpose of combining all our powers to win the war, using the fact of our union as an engine of propaganda in occupied and enemy countries; and second, "that this program be only the first step in the gradual, peaceful extension of . . . . federal union to all peoples willing and able to adhere to them, so that from this nucleus may grow eventually a universal world government of, by and for the people". (It sounds impractical, but so did the Communist Manifesto and Hitler's "ravings".)

As to the immediate program, it would instantly revive the latent isolationism of tens of millions who used to insist that the Roosevelt policy would end in the sacrifice of our independence; we should have a unified control of production, but some 40% of our producers would lose all faith in our government. In the midst of winning the war, we should have to re-convince millions that we had not intentionally betrayed them.

Military and productive unity can be independent of political

unity. Unified command was achieved in France in 1918 and in the Pacific in 1942, without unions.

As for effect abroad, propaganda could present a better case to Frenchmen who believe Britain let them down if complete Anglo-American union were not an accomplished fact; and the whole Continental and Russian and Asiatic suspicion of our motives might be allayed if we did not unite completely and permanently with "the people of Canada, the United Kingdom, Eire, Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa" while we were not so fondly embracing the peoples of India, China, and the Netherlands East Indies. The abiding union of literate, superior, capitalist white men is not going to be taken as a first step to world equality by Slavs and Orientals; and much as the British Empire may wish not to acknowledge the fact, Communism has completely undermined the idea of white supremacy, and has given a new hope to Asia and Africa. It may have been a very bad thing to do, but we cannot stop for recriminations now. There are new soldiers for democracy in the world, and if they are fighting beside us, we cannot ignore them and fall into the arms of their traditional oppressors. We have a great work to do with the Chinese and the Indians, and all the other peoples who can stand against our enemy; we cannot begin to do it if our first move is accepting British overlordship in the East, uncritically, without pledges or promises.

As a post-war program Federal Union is more persuasive. It begins with a Wilsonian peace offer—the influence is strong and supplies the deep emotional appeal of the organization. It guarantees free access to rubber and oil and gold; it accepts any nation whose people had certain minimal freedoms; it implies, of course, free trade—with new markets for our manufactured products, and no duties on British woolens; plans for the Union Congress "assure the American people a majority" at the start. (As between the United States and

the British Commonwealth; as soon as "all peoples willing and able" to, enter, the 200 million American and British Commonwealthers would be swamped by 800 million Chinese and Indians and other Asiatics.)

The average American pays a great tribute to the largeness of the concept of "Union-now"—he doesn't believe that anyone really means it. He thinks it is a fancy name for a war alliance, or possibly a new simplified League of Nations. The gross actuality of Iowa and Yorkshire ruled by one governing body, he cannot take in. And as the argument develops, this general scepticism is justified; for the American learns that while he may be ruled, he will not be over-ruled, and he wonders what Mr. Churchill and the man in the London street will say to that, or in what disguise this plan is being presented to the English or the Scots or the New Zealanders. So far no responsible British statesman has offered union to the United States, but Mr. Leslie Hore-Belisha has said that we need a declaration of inter-dependence and our Ambassador to the Court of St. James's told an international Society of writers that we need a sort of international citizenship. Mr. Wendell Willkie however has said that "American democracy must rule the world."

### *Entry Into Europe*

By union or by alliance, American or Anglo-American rule over the world will have some strange consequences for us, citizens not accustomed to worry over "foreign affairs". Perhaps the strangest thing is that the results will be almost the same whether we are partners with Britain or alone in our mighty domination, with England as a satellite. An American or Anglo-American imperium can only be organized by force; it is, in effect, the old order of Europe, with America playing Britain's old star part, Britain reduced to the supporting role of France or Holland or Portugal. In any controversy, we step in, with our vast industrial power, our democratic tradition, our aloofness from Europe, just as England used to step

in with *her* power and traditions; the Atlantic is to us what the Channel or North Sea was to Britain. England's policy was to prevent the rise of any single Continental power, so she made an alliance with Prussia to fight France in 1814 and made an alliance with France to fight Prussia in 1914. In an Anglo-American alliance, England would be our European outpost, just as Prussia or France was England's Continental outpost.

Our policy would still be the balance of power. Like England, we should be involved in every war, whether we take up arms or not—as she was involved in the Crimea and the Balkans, and South Africa and North Africa; we should have our Fashodas and our Algeiras and our Mafeking; our peace will be uneasy, our wars not our own.

The Atlantic Charter suggests a “policing” of the world after the war; it holds off from anything further; it does not actually hint that a reorganization of power in the world is needed. Yet, at the same time, the creation of an oceanic bloc to combat the European land bloc is hinted. It is all rather like a German professor's dream of geo-politics; Russia becomes a Pacific power and Japan, by a miserable failure of geography, is virtually a Continental one, while the United States is reduced to two strips of ocean frontage, like a real estate development with no back lot, with no back country, with no background in the history of a Continent.

The Sea-Powers unit is as treacherous as “the Atlantic group” or “the Democratic countries”; the intent is still to create a dominant power and give ourselves (and Britain) control of the raw materials and the trade of the world. No matter how naturally the group comes together, by tradition or self-interest, it becomes instantly the nucleus for an alliance; and as the alliance begins to form, nations we omit or reject begin to crystallize around some other centre, and we have the balance of power again, the race for markets and the race for armaments.

This will be particularly true if we begin to play the diplo-

matic game with the stakes greater than those ever thrown—since we are the first two-ocean nation to enter world affairs. At the moment nothing seems more detestable than the policy of Japan; but diplomacy overcomes all detestation, and if we are going in for the game of dealing with nations instead of peoples, we can foresee ourselves years from now as the great balance between the Atlantic and the Pacific, between Japan and England, or Japan and Germany, perhaps the honest broker between the two sets of powers. In 1942 we are independent, fighting for freedom, helping all those who fight against tyranny; and we can do this because we have kept out of the groupings and combinations of the powers. But we are being pushed into a combination and we know now that there is only one way to avoid entanglement: we must prevent the combination from coming into existence.

#### *Our Historic Decision*

In 1919 an attempt was made, by America, to put an end to all European combinations of power. That attempt was *unanimously* approved by the people of the United States, some of whom voted for the League while the others endorsed a Society of Nations, to which W. G. Harding promised our adhesion. The Society of Nations was never seriously proposed, and Harding betrayed the American people; at the same time it was monumentally clear that France, with England's help, had sabotaged the actual League by making it a facade for a punitive alliance. Between these two betrayals, the idea of world organization was mortally compromised.

We may quarrel over the blame for the impotence of the League; did France invade the Ruhr because, without us in the League, she needed "protection"? or did we stay out of the League because we knew France would go into the Ruhr? That can be argued for ever. We know reasonably well why we kept out of the League; but no one troubles to remember how earnestly we wanted the League and prayed for it and wanted to enter, so that it remained always to trouble us as

we tried to sleep through the destruction of Ethiopia or Spain or Czecho-Slovakia.

The League was not a promise of security to the *people* of the United States. Our Government may have felt the need of a world order; we did not; the war had barely touched us, yet even those whom it had touched least were enthusiasts for a new federation of nations. It was neither fear nor any abstract love of peace. The League, or any other confederation of Europe, corresponded to our American need, which was to escape alliance with any single power or small group; to escape the danger of Europe united against us; and to escape the devil's temptation of imperialism—because *the people of the United States do not want to rule the world*. There is an instinct which tells us that those who rule are not independent; they are slaves to their slaves; it tells us that we are so constituted that we cannot rule over part of Europe or join with any part to rule the rest; it is our instinct of independence which forbids us in the end to destroy the liberty of any other nation.

This goes back to the thought of union with the British nations. If we unite, and we are dominant, do we not accept the responsibility of domination? The appetite for empire is great and as the old world turned to us in 1941, as the War of the Worlds placed us in the centre of action, as more and more we came to make the decisions, as Australia, Russia, China, Britain called to us for help—the image of America ruling the world grew dazzling bright. It was our duty—our destiny; Mr. Henry Luce recognized the American century, seeing us accepted by the world which already accepts our motor cars, chewing gum and moving pictures. To shrink from ruling the world is abject cowardice. Did England shrink in 1914? Or France under Napoleon? Or Rome under Augustus? Or Sweden under Gustavus Adolphus?

No. No despotism ever shrank from its "destiny" to destroy the freedom of other nations.



But the history of America will still create our destiny—and our destiny is *not* to rule the world.

*Our destiny is to remain independent and the only way we can remain independent is by cooperation with all the other nations of the earth. That is the only way for us to escape exclusive alliances, the pull of grandiose imperial schemes, the danger of alliances against us, and a tragic drift into the European war system which can destroy us.* There is an area of action in which nationality plays no part: like labor statistics—and this area is steadily growing; there is another area jealously guarded, the area of honor and tariffs and taxes. We have to mark out the parts of our lives which we can offer up to international supervision and the parts we cannot. It will surprise us to see that we can become more independent if we collaborate more.

*"Far as Human Eye Can See"*

I have no capacity to describe the world order after the war. If, as I have said, the war is fought by us in accordance with our national character, we will create a democratic relationship between the nations of the world; and our experience added to that of Britain and the USSR will tend toward a Federation of Commonwealths; the three great powers have arrived, by three separate experiences, at the idea of Federation; two of them are working out the problems of sovereign independent states within a union; the third, ourselves, worked the problem out long ago by expunging States Rights in theory and allowing a great deal in practise. As a result of our experience, we dogmatically assert that no Federation can be created without the ultimate extinction of independence; we may be right. But the thought persists that independence was wanted for the sake of liberty; that independence without security was the downfall of Czecho-Slovakia and France; and that we have cherished independence because the rest of the world did not cherish liberty as we did. Profoundly as I believe independence to be the

key to American action, I can imagine the translation of the word into other terms; we are allied to Britain and the Netherlands and the Soviets today, we have accepted alien command of our troops and ships; we are supplying arms to the Soviets and building a naval base in Ecuador and have accepted an agreement by which Great Britain will have a word in the creation of the most cherished of our independent creations, the tariff. Independence, so absolute in origin, is like all absolutes, non-existent in fact; we know this in private life, for the man of "independent means" may depend on ten thousand people to pay him dividends; and only the mad are totally independent of human needs and duties.

We will not willingly give up our right to elect a President; we may allow the President to appoint an American member to an international commission to allocate East Indies rubber; in return for which we will allocate our wheat or cotton or motors—on the advice of other nations, but without bowing our neck to their rule. We have always accepted specific international interference in our affairs—the Alabama claims and the Oregon boundary and the successive troubles in Venezuela prove that our "sovereign right" to do what we please was never exercised without some respect for the opinion of mankind—and the strength of the British navy. Indeed recent events indicate that for generations our independence of action, the reality of independence, rested on our faith in the British fleet.

The moment we become realistic about our independence we will be able to collaborate effectively with other nations. We got a few lessons in realistic dealings in 1941—lend-lease and the trade for the naval bases were blunt, statesmanlike but most undiplomatic—moves to strengthen the British fleet, to extend our own area of safety, and to give us time against the threat of Japan. They protected our independence, but they also compromised it; the British by any concession to Japan might have weakened us; we took the risk, and our action was in effect an act of defensive war against Germany.

Like Jefferson, buying Louisiana to protect us against any foreign power across the Mississippi, President Roosevelt acted under dire necessity and as Jefferson (not Roosevelt) put it, was not too deeply concerned with Constitutionality. The situation in 1941 required not only the bases but the continued functioning of the British fleet in the Atlantic; and we got what we needed.

The economic agreement of 1942 is probably a greater invasion of our simon-pure independence of action; although it empowers a post-war President to decide how much of lend-lease was returned by valor in the field, it specifically binds us to alter our tariff if Britain can induce its Commonwealth of Nations to give up the system of "imperial preference". All our tariffs are horsetrades and the most-favored nation is a sweet device; but heretofore we have not bartered our tariffs in advance. Certainly a post-war economic union is in the wind; certainly we will accept it if it comes to us piecemeal, by agreements and joint-commissions and international resolutions which are not binding, but are accepted and become as routine as the law of copyright which once invaded our sacred national right to steal or the international postal union which gave us the right to send a letter to any country for five cents.

When we think of the future our minds are clouded by memory of the League; we are psychologically getting ready to accept or reject the League all over again. We are worried over the form—will it be Geneva again or will headquarters be in Washington; will Germany have a vote; will we have to go to war if the Supreme Council tells us to. These are important if we are actually going to reconstitute the League; but if we are not, the only question is what we want the new world organization to do. In keeping with our political tradition we will pretend that we want it to do as little as possible and put upon it all the work we are too lazy to do ourselves; but even the minimum will be enough.

*Our Standing Offer*

Everything points to an economic council representing the free nations of the world; the lease-lend principles in time of peace may be invoked, as Harold Laski has suggested, to provide food and raw materials for less favored nations; and the need for "economic sanctions" will not be lost on the nation which supplied Japan with scrap-iron and oil for five years of aggression against China and then was repaid at Pearl Harbor.

If there is any wisdom—in the people or in their leaders—we will not have a formulated League to accept or reject; we will have a series of agreements (such as we have had for generations) covering more and more subjects, with more and more nations. We have drawn up treaties and agreements with twenty South American States, with forty-six nations united for liberty; we can draw up an agreement with Russia and Rumania and the Netherlands so that England and the Continent and China get oil; and another agreement may give us tungsten; we may have to take universal action to stop typhus—and no one will be an isolationist then. If the war ends by a series of uprisings we may be establishing temporary governments as part of our military strategy. Slowly the form of international cooperation will be seen; by that time it will be familiar to us—and we will see that we have not lost our independence, but have gained our liberty.

We began the war with one weapon: liberty. If we fight the war well, we will begin the long peace with two: liberty and production. With them we will not need to rule the world; with them the world will be able to rule itself. All we have to do is to demonstrate the best use of the instruments—and to let others learn.

Before our part in the war began, it was often suggested that America would feed and clothe Europe, send medicine and machinery to China, and make itself generally the post-war stockpile of Democracy as it had been the arsenal and

treasury during the war; and the monotonous uncrushing answer was about "the money". Realities of war have blown "the money" question into atoms; no sensible person pretends that there is a real equation between our production and money value; we can't in any sense "afford" bombers and battleships; if we stopped to ask where "the money" would come from, and if the question were actually relevant, we would have to stop the war.

Another actuality of war relieves us of the danger of being too generous—the actuality of rubber and tin and tungsten and all the other materials critical to production in peace time. Since we will have to rebuild our stocks of vital goods, our practical men will see to it that we get as well as give; we may send food to Greece and get rubber from Java, but on the books we will not be doing too badly.

Neither money nor the bogey of a balance of trade is going to decide our provisioning of Europe and Asia; the cold necessity of preventing revolution and typhus will force us to rebuild and re-energize; in the end, like all enlargements of the market, this will repay us. The rest of the world will know a great deal about mass production by the end of the war: Indians and Australians will be expert at interchangeable parts; but we will have the immeasurable advantage of our long experience on which the war has forced us to build a true productive system. We will jump years ahead of our schedule of increase and improvement because of the war; and we will be able to face any problem of production—if we want to, or have to. The choice between people's lives and the gold standard will have to be made again, as it was by many nations in the 1930's; only this time the choice is not without a threat. After wars, people are accustomed to bloodshed; they prefer it to starvation.

### *Alternative to Prosperity*

The greatest invention of democracy is the wealth of the people. We discovered that wealth rested more firmly on

prosperity than on poverty and the genius of our nation has gone into creating a well-to-do mass of citizens. Unfinished as the job is, we can start to demonstrate its principles to others. In return they may refrain from teaching us the principles of revolution.

Recovery and freedom are our concrete actual offer to the nations of Europe, counter to the offer of Hitler. Without this literal, concrete offer, we shall have to fight longer to defeat Hitler—and every added day costs us lives and money and strength inside ourselves which we need to create the new world; if we can defeat Hitler without the aim of liberty, our victory will be incomplete; we will not automatically emancipate France or Jugo-Slavia, or draw Rumania back into the orbit of free nations. Within each nation a powerful group profits by the Nazi-system; within each a vast population, battered, disheartened, diseased, wants only the meanest security, one meal a day, shelter only from the bitter days, something more than a rag for clothing—and an end to the struggle; these are not heroes, they are old people, men and women struck down and beaten and starved so that they cannot rise, but can drag down those who attempt to rise. These we may save only by giving them food and forgetfulness. On the other side there are the young—carefully indoctrinated, worked over to believe that the offer of fascism is hard, but practical; it is an offer of slavery and security; whereas they are told the offer of the democratic countries is an hypocrisy and—worse still—cannot be made good. We have to face the disagreeable fact that the Balkan peasant in 1900 heard of universal suffrage and high wages in America, and his grandchildren know more about our sharecroppers and race riots and strike breakers than we do—because the Goebbels machine has played the dark side of our record a million times. The first year of the war was bound to show the “superiority” of the German production technique over ours, since Europe will not know that we are still at the beginning of actual production. The mind of Europe knows

little good of us; we have not yet begun to undermine the fascist influence by words, and our acts are not yet planned. Even after Hitler is destroyed, we will have to act to overcome impotence in political action which years of Nazi "conditioning" induces, and to compensate for the destruction of technical skill in the occupied areas. To us the end of the war is a wild moving picture of gay processions, swastikas demolished, prisons opened, and the governments-in-exile hailed at the frontiers; all of these things may happen, but the reality, after the parade, will be a grim business of re-making the flesh and the spirit of peoples. The children of Israel rejoiced and sang as they crossed the Red Sea; but they had been slaves. So Moses led them forty years in the wilderness, when he could have gone directly to the Promised Land in forty months, because he wanted a generation of slaves to die, and a generation of hardy freemen to be in full mature power.\* The generation we will raise to power in the occupied countries will have great experience of tyranny, none of freedom; it will know all about our shortcomings and nothing of our triumphs; it will distrust our motives and methods; it will have seen the Nazis at work and know nothing of new techniques of production; we will have to teach them to be free and to work.

---

\*I have not traveled the route; but General Sir Francis Young-husband who had, gave me the figures—and the motive.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Liberty Bell

ABOVE ALL THINGS our function is to proclaim liberty, to proclaim it as the soil on which we grow and as the air we breathe, to make the world understand that liberty is what we fight for and live by. We have to keep the word always sounding so that people will not forget—and we have to create liberty so that it is always real and people will have a goal to fight for, and never believe that it is only a word. We do not need to convert the world to a special form of political democracy, but we have to keep liberty alive so that the peoples who want to be free can destroy their enemies and count on us to help. We will do it by the war we are waging and the peace we will make and the prosperity of the peoples of the world which we will underwrite. For in the act of proclaiming and creating liberty we must also give to the world the demonstration we have made at home: that there is no liberty if the people perish of starvation and that alone among all the ways of living tried in the long martyrdom of man, freedom can destroy poverty.

We have been bold in creating food and cars and radios and electric power; now we must be bold in creating liberty on a scale never known before, not even to ourselves. For we have to create enough liberty to take up the shameful slack in our own country. We all know, indifferently, that people (somewhere—where was it?—wasn't there a movie about them?) hadn't enough to eat. But we assume that Americans always have enough liberty. The Senate's committee report on the fascism of organized big-farming in California is a shock which Americans are not aware of; in the greater shock of war we do not understand that we have been weakened internally, as England was weakened by its distressed areas



and its Malayan snobbery. We do not yet see the difference between the misfortune of an imperfect economic system and calculated denials of liberty. We have denied liberty in hundreds of instances, until certain sections of the country, certain portions of industry, have become black infections of fascism and have started the counter-infection of communism. Most of the shameful occasions we have cheerfully forgotten; in the midst of our war against tyranny, any new blow at our liberty is destructive. Here are the facts in the California case, chosen because the documentation comes from official sources:

“Unemployment, underemployment, disorganized and haphazard migrancy, lack of adequate wages or annual income, bad housing, insufficient education, little medical care, the great public burden of relief, the denial of civil liberties, riots, strife, corruption are all part and parcel of this autocratic system of labor relations that has for decades dominated California’s agricultural industry.”

The American people do not know that such things exist; no American orator has dared to say “except in three or four states, all men are equal in the eyes of the law”—or, “trial by jury is the right of every man except farm hands in California, who may be beaten at will.” When the Senate’s report is repeated to us from Japanese short-wave we will call it propaganda—and it will be the terrible potent propaganda of truth. We will still call for “stern measures”, if a laborer who has lost the rights of man on American soil does not go into battle with a passion in his heart to die for liberty, and we will not understand that we have been at fault, because we have not created liberty. We have been living on borrowed liberty, not of our own making.

We have not seen that some of our “cherished liberties” are heirlooms, beautiful antiques, not usable in the shape they come to us. We have the right to publish—but we cannot afford to print a newspaper—so that we have to create a new

freedom of the press. We have the right to keep a musket on the wall, but our enemies have ceased to prowl, the musket is an antique, and we need a new freedom to protect ourselves from officious bureaucrats. We have the right to assemble, but men of one mind, men of one trade, live a thousand miles apart, so we need a new freedom to combine—and a new restriction on combination, too.

Freedom is always more dangerous than discipline, and the more complex our lives, the more dangerous is any freedom. This we know; we know that discipline and order are dangerous, too, because they cannot tolerate imperfection. A nation cannot exist half-slave and half-free, but it can exist 90% free, especially if the direction of life is toward freedom; that is what we have proved in 160 years. But a nation cannot exist 90% slave—or 90% regimented—because every degree of order multiplies the power of disorder. If a machine needs fifty meshed-in parts, for smooth operation, the failure of one part destroys forty-nine; if it needs five million, the failure of one part destroys five million.

That is the hope of success for our strategy against the strategy of "totality"; the Nazis have surpassed the junkers by their disciplined initiative in the field, a genuine triumph; but we still do not know whether a whole people can be both disciplined and flexible; we have not yet seen the long-run effect of Hitler's long vituperation of Bolshevism, his treaty with Stalin, and his invasion of Russia—unless the weakening of Nazi power, its failure to press success into victory at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad reflect a hesitation in the stupefied German mind, an incapacity to change direction.

Whether our dangers are greater than those of fascism may be proved in war; it remains for us to make the most of them, to transform danger into useful action. We have to increase freedom, because as freedom grows, it brings its own regulation and discipline; the dangers of liberty came to us only after we began to neglect it or suppress it; freedom itself is orderly, because it is a natural state of men, it is not

chaos, it begins when the slave is set free and ends when the murderer destroys the freedom of others; between the tyrant and the anarchist lies the area of human freedom.

It is also the area of human cooperation, the condition of life in which man uses all of his capacities because he is not deprived of the right to work, by choice, with other men. In that area, freedom expands and is never destructive. The flowering of freedom in the past hundred years has been less destructive to humanity than the attempted extension of slavery has been in the past decade; for when men create liberty, they destroy only what is already dead.

I have used the phrase "creating enough liberty"—as if the freedom of man were a commodity; *and it is*. So long as we think of it as a great abstraction, it will remain one; the moment we *make* liberty it becomes a reality; the Declaration of Independence *made* liberty, concretely, out of taxes and land and jury trials and muskets. Liberty, like love, has to be made; the passion out of which love rises exists always, but people have to *make love*, or the passion is betrayed; and the acts by which human beings make liberty are as fundamental as the act of sexual intercourse by which love is made. And as love recreates itself and has to be made, in order to live again, liberty has also to be re-created, or it dies out. Whatever lovers do affects the profound relation between them, for the passion is complex; whatever we do affects our liberties, for freedom rises out of a thousand circumstances; and we have to be not only eternally vigilant, but eternally creative; we can no longer live on the liberty inherited from the great men who created liberty in the Declaration of Independence. All that quantity has been exhausted, stolen from us, misused; if we want to survive, we must begin to make liberty again and proclaim it throughout the land, to all the inhabitants thereof; and it shall be a jubilee unto them.

